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A Touch of Red

*Archaeological and Ethnographic Approaches to
Interpreting Finnish Rock Paintings*

Antti Lahelma

To Margit

A TOUCH OF RED: ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TO INTERPRETING FINNISH ROCK PAINTINGS

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PREFACE

“Why rock paintings?”, I have often been asked. “What is so interesting about those prehistoric doodles?”

At first I, too, was rather unimpressed. When I began studying archaeology in 1994, the Finnish rock paintings seemed too unsophisticated and simple to be of any great interest. I was planning to concentrate on Ancient Mesoamerica, the Minoan civilization or something similar - regions and cultures that were socially more complex and, it seemed to me, had a completely different kind of character and appeal than the hunter-gatherers of the Boreal zone.

My interest in hunter-gatherer rock art was first awakened by the publication of Pekka Kivikäs' book *Kalliomaalaukset - muinainen kuva-arkisto* ('Rock paintings: an ancient picture archive') in 1995, which raised a considerable amount of interest in the Finnish media and among the general public. In his book, he calls the art “silent pictures” and writes that it demands from the spectator an ability to slow down, be silent and listen. Although trained as a high school arts teacher, he admits that he, too, had at first failed to concentrate and had felt a little disappointed with the rock paintings. Little by little, however, he became more and more captivated by their mystery. The same has happened to me, and I hope that this dissertation can convey - in addition to the theories and factual information - something of the deep fascination I have felt in my encounters with the paintings.

Although it is easy at first to dismiss rock art as an incomprehensible and unexciting thing of the past, I suspect that anyone who makes the effort to understand it will be rewarded, because hunter-gatherer rock art carries messages that are universal in the fullest sense of the word. It reflects the thoughts and worldview of an era - the hunter-gatherer Stone Age - that was of fundamental significance to human evolution and which, therefore, is still today reflected in the behaviour, dreams and desires of all human beings. These messages often appear incomprehensible, but they can nonetheless have a deep emotional impact, because they show us a glimpse of the world in which our species developed but which has now almost completely disappeared.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Margit Granberg, who has somehow endured my obsession with rock art during the past three years, accompanied me on field trips and excavations, and helped me to relax and shrug off my frustrations and bad moods resulting from too much work. I am also deeply grateful to my parents, Timo and Marjo-Riitta Lahelma, who have never seriously disputed my questionable career choice and have offered me financial security in times of need.

From a more academic point of view, I owe much to my two supervisors, professors Mika Lavento (University of Helsinki) and Knut Helskog (Tromsø University Museum), both of whom have helped me in more ways than I can count. I have also had the good fortune of sharing the company of a group of talented researchers and post-graduate students at the Institute of Archaeology in Helsinki. Discussions and exchange of ideas with Teemu Mökkönen, Kristiina Mannermaa, Anna Wickholm, Mikael Manninen, Henrik Jansson, Mervi Suhonen, Petri Halinen, Tuija Kirkinen, Paula Kouki and Oula Seitsonen have greatly contributed to this work. I reserve special thanks to Vesa-Pekka Herva, on whose help I have always been able to count, and who has read and commented on almost all parts of this work at manuscript stage. I also thank Tuovi Laire, the office secretary, for her patience and efficiency in arranging most of the practical matters relating to my graduate and post-graduate studies in archaeology.

In addition to the people of the Institute of Archaeology in Helsinki, I owe thanks to many researchers and staff affiliated with other institutions. These include at least Kari A. Kinnunen

(Geological Survey of Finland), Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (Institute of Archaeology, University of Turku), Anna-Leena Siikala (Institute of Folkloristics, University of Helsinki), Kaarina Koski (Institute of Folkloristics, University of Helsinki), Milton Núñez (Department of Artstudies and Anthropology, University of Oulu), Paula Purhonen (Finnish National Board of Antiquities), Risto Pulkkinen (Institute of Comparative Religion, University of Helsinki), Juha Pentikäinen (Institute of Comparative Religion, University of Helsinki), Zbigniew T. Fiema (Department of Classical Philology, University of Helsinki) and Joonas Sipilä (Department of History, University of Helsinki). Outside Finland, I feel grateful to a number of colleagues similarly bitten by the rock art bug: Liliana Janik (University of Cambridge), Jan Magne Gjerde (University of Tromsø), Lars Forsberg (University of Bergen), Trond Lødøen (University of Bergen), Richard Bradley (University of Reading) and Joakim Goldhahn (University of Kalmar). Special thanks to Jan Magne and Knut for their hospitality during my visit to Tromsø in Fall 2006.

Much of what I know about practical archaeology I have learned from fellow archaeologists Hannu Poutiainen, Hannu Takala, Timo Sepänmaa and Timo Miettinen. I give them my thanks for initiating me into this fascinating discipline. I feel grateful also to the staff of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities (*Museovirasto*), who have always been of very helpful and friendly to me. I give particular thanks to Helena Taskinen, Mirja Miettinen, Marianne Schauman-Lönnqvist, Leena Ruonavaara, Päivi Pykälä-Aho, Sanna Saunaluoma and Tanja Tenhunen, on whose assistance I have always been able to count.

A group of non-professional but equally dedicated Finnish rock art researchers, including Pekka Kivikäs, Eero Siljander, Kimmo Puranen, Miikka Pyykkönen, Ismo Luukkonen and Ilpo Leskinen, have offered me their ideas, expertise and company on field trips, seminars and meetings. The good people of the Finnish Society for Prehistoric Art (*Suomen muinaistaideseura ry.*), headed by archaeologist Juhani Grönhagen, have renewed my enthusiasm for prehistoric art and its importance and potential as a source of inspiration even in the modern world. I also thank once more the people who made it possible for me to arrange the Valkeisaari excavations, the topic of Paper III in this dissertation: Anu Herva, Nina Heiska, Marja Lappalainen, Jari-Matti Kuusela, Katja Lange, Hannele Partanen, Wesa Pertola, Jenni Sahramaa, Henrik Tuominen, Jan Vihonen, Sisko Vuoriranta, Ilkka Pylkkö and Santeri Vanhanen

Last but not least, I offer my thanks to the foundations whose financial support made it possible for me to write this dissertation in the first place. The most important source of funding was a generous three-year grant awarded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation (*Suomen kulttuurirahasto*) in 2004. I have also received smaller but equally necessary support for fieldwork and travel expenses from the Niilo Helander Foundation (*Niilo Helanderin säätiö*), Foundation for Furthering Karelian Culture (*Karjalaisen kulttuurin edistämissäätiö*), the Finnish PhD School in Archaeology, the Nordic PhD School in Archaeology (*‘Dialogues with the Past’*) and the University of Helsinki.

LIST OF PAPERS

This thesis is formed by an introductory essay and five peer-reviewed papers. In the introduction, the papers are referred to according to their Roman numerals.

Paper I

Lahelma, A. 2005. Between the Worlds: Rock Art, Landscape and Shamanism in Subneolithic Finland. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 38 (1), 29-47.

Paper II

Lahelma, A. 2006. Excavating Art: a 'Ritual Deposit' Associated with the Rock Painting of Valkeisaari, Eastern Finland. *Fennoscandia Archaeologica* XXIII, 2-23.

Paper III

Lahelma, A. in press a. Communicating with 'Stone Persons': Anthropomorphism, Saami Religion and Finnish Rock Art. In Walderhaug, E. & Forsberg, L. (eds.) *Cognition and Signification in Northern Landscapes*. [UBAS International Series.] University of Bergen.

Paper IV

Lahelma, A. in press b. Politics, Ethnography and Prehistory: in Search of an 'Informed' Approach to Finnish and Karelian Rock Art. *To be published in the proceedings of the South African Conference on Rock Art (SACRA, 12.-17.2006) edited by Knut Helskog, David Morris and Ben Smith (University of the Witwatersrand Press).*

Paper V

Lahelma, A. 2007. 'On the Back of a Blue Elk': Recent Ethnohistorical Sources and 'Ambiguous' Stone Age Rock art at Pyhänpää, Central Finland. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 40 (2), 113-137.

ABSTRACT

Approximately 125 prehistoric rock paintings have been found in the modern territory of Finland. The paintings were done with red ochre and are almost without exception located on steep lakeshore cliffs associated with ancient water routes. Most of the sites are found in the central and eastern parts of the country, especially on the shores of Lakes Päijänne and Saimaa. Using shore displacement chronology, the art has been dated to ca. 5000 – 1500 BC. It was thus created mainly during the Stone Age and can be associated with the so-called ‘Comb Ware’ cultures of the Subneolithic period.

The range of motifs is rather limited, consisting mainly of schematic depictions of stick-figure humans, elks, boats, handprints and geometric signs. Few paintings include any evidence of narrative scenes, making their interpretation a rather difficult task. In Finnish archaeological literature, the paintings have traditionally been associated with ‘sympathetic’ hunting magic, or the belief that the ritual shooting of the painted animals would increase hunting luck. Some writers have also suggested totemistic and shamanistic readings of the art.

This dissertation is a critical review of the interpretations offered of Finnish rock art and an exploration of the potentials of archaeological and ethnographic research in increasing our knowledge of its meaning. Methods used include ‘formal’ approaches such as archaeological excavation, landscape analysis and the application of neuropsychological research to the study of rock art, as well as ethnographically ‘informed’ approaches that make use of Saami and Baltic Finnish ethnohistorical sources in interpretation.

In conclusion, it is argued that although North European hunter-gatherer rock art is often thought to lie beyond the reach of ‘informed’ knowledge, the informed approach is valid in the case of Finnish rock paintings. The art can be confidently associated with shamanism of the kind still practiced by the Saami of Northern Fennoscandia in the historical period. Evidence of similar shamanistic practices, concepts and cosmology are also found in traditional Finnish-Karelian epic poetry. Previous readings of the art based on ‘hunting magic’ and totemism are rejected.

Most of the paintings appear to depict experiences of falling into a trance, of shamanic metamorphosis and trance journeys, and of ‘spirit helper’ beings comparable to those employed by the Saami shaman or noaidi. As demonstrated by the results of an excavation at the rock painting of Valkeisaari, the painted cliffs themselves find a close parallel in the Saami cult of the sieidi, or sacred cliffs and boulders worshipped as expressing a supernatural power.

Like the Saami, the prehistoric inhabitants of the Finnish Lake Region seem to have believed that certain cliffs were ‘alive’ and inhabited by the spirit helpers of the shaman. The rock paintings can thus be associated with shamanic vision quests, and the making of ‘art’ with an effort to socialize the other members of the community, especially the ritual specialists, with trance visions. However, the paintings were not merely to be looked at. The red ochre handprints pressed on images of elks, as well as the fact that many paintings appear ‘smeared’, indicate that they were also to be touched – perhaps in order to tap into the supernatural potency inherent in the cliff and in the paintings of spirit animals.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The main research questions

Since the early 20th century, archaeologists and amateurs in Finland have little by little discovered a fragile legacy of prehistoric red ochre rock paintings done several millennia ago on lakeshore cliffs (Fig. 1). Rather than ‘art’ in the modern sense, these paintings are generally thought to reflect the religious beliefs and rituals of the Subneolithic ‘Comb Ware’ cultures that populated the Finnish Lake Region between ca. 5100-1500 BC (e.g., Edgren 1993: 84-6; Huurre 1998: 269-87). Stone Age archaeological research in Finland has often been content to study the material and economic aspects of prehistoric cultures, but rock paintings invite a different kind of response. Even if they are often faint, seemingly monotonous and – from a purely aesthetic point of view – rather clumsily painted, this humble art offers a unique window into the spiritual life of hunter-gatherer societies in Stone Age Finland.

This essay was written as a general introduction to my PhD dissertation on the interpretation of Finnish rock paintings. The art itself contains little in terms of narrative scenes and as such offers only vague clues concerning the intended meanings. We can, of course, see that much of the art *represents* humans, elk and boats – a fact that has led many earlier writers to associate the art with hunting elk – but it is important to realize that a pictorial ‘sign’ and the particular concept or thing that it ‘signifies’ are not necessarily related in any way (Tilley 1991: 20). Their relationship is a matter of historical and social convention. A well-known example involves the images of fish in Early Christian art, which refer to the Christian faith, not to the scaly aquatic vertebrates. The question I am interested in is, therefore, what do the images of the rock art *signify*?

Indeed, there is much to indicate that things are not as simple as once thought. For example, in nature elk do not have two heads or antlers that are almost as big as the animal, but in the rock paintings they occasionally do. In the rock paintings, humans are never shown hunting the elk, but occasionally they are shown (unrealistically) riding the animal like a horse. A few images appear positively surreal. What should we make, for example, of a ‘boat figure’ that has the head and legs of an elk (see figs. 4c-d in [Paper V](#))? One can only conclude that the elk “are not what they seem”.



FIGURE 1. The rock painting of Juusjarvi near Helsinki on an early spring day in 2006. Who painted the cliff and why? What happened here thousands of years ago? Photo: Antti Lahelma.

A second, related question is: “Why was the art created?” What purpose did painting pictures on rock cliffs serve in a Stone Age hunter-gatherer society? As already indicated, ‘art’ intuitively invites from us a different kind of response than, for example, stone tools, but here we immediately fall into the dangerous area of Western, preconceived notions of what ‘art’ is and why it is done. Prehistoric reasons may have been entirely different (cf. Morphy & Perkins 2006).

The ‘meaning’ of the art and the reasons why it was done are, of course, two huge questions to which this book cannot hope to provide a comprehensive answer. In this respect, my dissertation aims more to encourage discussion rather than to say any ‘final words’ on the subject. To be a little more specific, I approach these wider questions through a detailed examination of a series of questions of a more limited scope, such as the following:

- Are Finnish and Saami ethnography and folklore of ‘direct’ relevance to interpreting the art?
- If they are, why has so little use been made of them so far?
- Can archaeological excavation shed light on the interpretation of the art?
- Why are rock paintings located in specific kinds of places in the landscape? Is the location an interpretative element?
- Why are images of elk, boats and men by far the most common motifs in the art? And why do they sometimes merge together in seemingly ‘unrealistic’ ways?
- Why do some human figures have features of an animal? And why are they sometimes painted upside-down or at a 45° angle?

This work is the first systematic exploration of the potentials of both archaeology and ethnography in interpreting the meaning of Finnish rock art. Most earlier attempts to interpret this art (see chapter 3.1) have been rather narrow in scope. They have, moreover, made only limited use of actual archaeological methods in studying the art, and have by and large ignored the rich, local ethnographic sources in its interpretation.

It has been argued (Conkey 1997, and cf. several contributions in Whitley 2001 and Keyser *et al.* 2006) that many of the most important recent advances in rock art research have been made through ethnographic analysis – a point well illustrated by the work of scholars such as David Whitley (1994; 1998; 2000) and David Lewis-Williams (1981; 2003a; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004). This work is a Finnish contribution to this international discussion. Although concentrated on the Finnish material (with some references to neighbouring areas, especially in [Papers IV and V](#)), to my mind, the results bear a wider relevance to the study of North European hunter-gatherer rock art and – I hope – the archaeology of the region in general.

1.2 Methods used

The methods used in the scientific study of rock art can be divided into three basic approaches (Taçon & Chippindale 1998): informed methods, formal methods and general analogy. This dissertation makes use of all three.

1.2.1 *Informed methods*

An ethnographically ‘informed’ approach refers to the use of ethnographic ‘inside’ information concerning the meaning of a rock art tradition. Such information is only rarely available, and its validity is sometimes contested. The informed approach to rock art interpretation has thus been variously received in different parts of the world in different decades. For example, whereas in Australia native ethnography has always been a self-evident component in the study of rock art (Layton 1992), in South Africa an initial use of /Xam ethnography pioneered by Orpen (1874) was later rejected, only to be rediscovered and re-embraced in the past two or three decades (Vinnicombe 1976; Lewis-Williams 1981; Blundell 2004; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004). In the same way, in the 1960s Native American ethnography was rejected in interpretations of the rock art of the American South-West (Heizer & Baumhoff 1962), but has been ‘rehabilitated’ in the last two decades (Whitley 1994; 1998; 2000). Furthermore, while most researchers would agree that the most celebrated rock art of all, the Palaeolithic cave art of Spain and France, lies outside the parameters of ethnographic ‘inside information’, the use of ethnographic analogy in its interpretations has experienced similar ups and downs in the past one hundred years. Used by the early interpreters (Reinach 1903; Breuil 1952), ethnography was later rejected by the structuralists (e.g., Leroi-Gourhan 1968) but has recently been applied by scholars such as David Lewis-Williams and Jean Clottes (e.g., Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998; Lewis-Williams 2002).

In this study, I argue that although the pre-Christian Saami and Finnish religious traditions never explicitly mention rock art, some sources available to us are highly relevant to understanding its meaning. As already pointed out by Radcliffe-Brown (1948), ethnographic texts are raw data that must be ‘read’ and interpreted. This dissertation includes some readings of ethnographic accounts that, in my opinion, make the informed approach to Finnish rock art valid. The approach is not altogether new. Although the early interpreters of Finnish rock art tended to rely on ahistorical theories of hunting magic, the use of local (mainly Saami) ethnography in interpretations of Finnish rock was already pioneered in the 1970s by Ville Luho (1970; 1971) and, to a lesser extent, by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1978; 1981). My approach thus represents a somewhat similar return to ethnographic sources that has occurred, for example, in North American rock art research.

1.2.2 *Formal methods*

Formal methods refer to those methods that depend on no ‘inside knowledge’. These rely on the information that is inherent in the images, associated finds and the location of the sites. We may, for example, gain some understanding from a semiotic analysis of the images (Conkey 2001); from their location in landscape (Bradley 1997); or, for instance, from the study of neuropsychological phenomena related to altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams



FIGURE 2. A descendant of a Saami shaman (noaidi) studies the Stone Age rock painting of Flatruet, Northern Sweden. Photo taken by Ernst Manker in 1938 (from Manker 1965: 17).

& Dowson 1988). The importance of formal methods generally increases the further back in prehistory we go.

Formal methods used in this dissertation include archaeological excavations and soil geochemical analysis conducted at rock art sites ([Paper II](#)), a study of rock art location in the light of the cognitive study of religion ([Paper III](#)), quantitative studies of motif distribution and location (in this introduction) and some inferences made using the 'neuropsychological model' (in [Paper I](#)). Although the model is not emphasised in most of the papers, it forms an important, independent line of argument that supports several of the conclusions presented in this introductory essay. A short review of the model is therefore warranted.

In the past two decades, many archaeologists have sought support for their interpretations of rock art in neuropsychological research (for reviews of this research, see, e.g., Lewis-Williams 2001; Whitley 2006: 109-22). As presented by David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson in their 1988 article titled *The Signs of All Times: Entoptic Phenomena in Upper Palaeolithic Art*, the 'neuropsychological model' is based on the undeniable fact that all anatomically modern humans share the same nervous system (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988: 202). We experience the world in a fundamentally similar way, and even our dreams and hallucinations are similar. Neuropsychological research on human cognition is thus cross-culturally applicable and forms a kind of 'bridge' to prehistory. The visions and sensations experienced by a 21st century European in trance are fundamentally similar to those experienced by the rock painters 6000 years ago.

In certain altered states of consciousness, induced, for example, by the use of psychoactive drugs, hyperventilation, rhythmic drumming or dancing, it is possible to experience visual phenomena – sometimes called 'entoptics' (from the Greek, 'within vision') – that manifest themselves in simple geometric forms, always the same regardless of the cultural background of the person. This visual imagery is, according to Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1988: 204), experienced differently in the three cumulative stages through which the deepening trance progresses (Fig. 3). However, perhaps more importantly from the point of view of this work, Chippindale *et al.* (2000: 72-74) have emphasised that an altered state of consciousness also involves specific somatic experiences that are similarly universal. This includes sensations of metamorphosis, weightlessness, breathlessness and out-of-body experiences, which, in a state of deep trance, are typically interpreted as flying through the air, diving under water or dying. Like the visual hallucinations experienced in a trance, such experiences may have inspired some of the imagery of shamanistic rock art – including the apparent depictions of metamorphosis and subaquatic travel that I find central to the interpretation of Finnish rock art.

The neuropsychological model has attracted much discussion in rock art research. Although embraced by many scholars, the model has not won universal acceptance (for critical views,

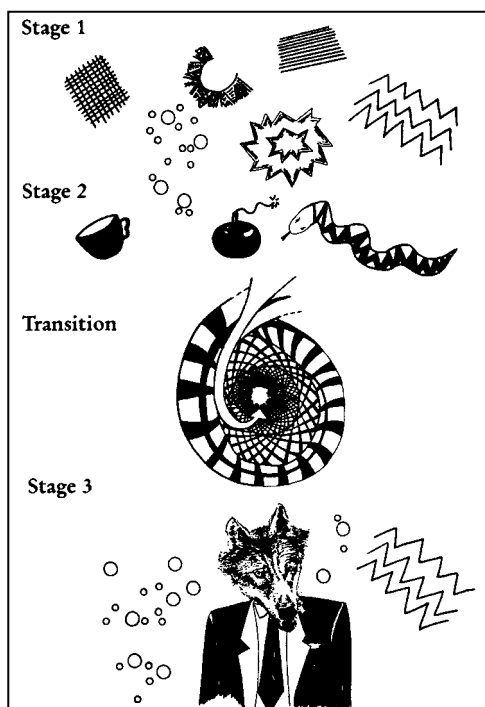


FIGURE 3. The three stages of trance as they might be perceived by a Westerner (according to Lewis-Williams 2001). Reproduced with the permission of Rock Art Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

see, e.g., Bahn 2001; Helvenston & Bahn 2003; Kehoe 2003). In spite of the controversy surrounding the model, it has arguably brought a certain sense of direction to Stone Age rock art research. In the words of Whitley (2006: 110), the model is best understood as a formal analytical tool, the purpose of which is “to determine whether a corpus of art portrays hallucinatory imagery”. Conversely, the identification of hallucinatory imagery in rock art does not reveal its meaning, only its origin.

1.2.3 General analogy

As the principles of using analogy in archaeology have been discussed in Papers IV and V, it is not necessary to discuss the subject here in any great detail. It is sufficient to note that although general analogies based, for instance, on the ethnography of the South African /Xam may appear rather far-fetched from the point of view of Finnish rock art, they can provide important insights into the question of how rock art as a phenomenon should be approached. As David Whitley (2006: 86) has written,

[...] rock art ethnography gives us a context within which the plausibility of any particular rock art interpretation can be assessed. Put another way, ethnography provides a series of competing hypotheses that can be evaluated for any empirical case. And, while there is no reason to assume that every prehistoric example will necessarily conform to the origin and meaning of the ethnographic cases, a starting place for analysis is the assumption that a prehistoric case should be reasonably close to the known range of variation in the ethnography.

As mentioned above, detailed records on rock art ethnography are extremely rare worldwide, but some information has been preserved in regions like South Africa (e.g., Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004), Canada (Rajnovich 1994), Australia (Layton 1992) and California (Whitley 2000). Some Siberian sources apparently also describe beliefs associated with rock art (Okladnikov 1972: 41; Devlet 2004), but I have been unable to find any detailed information on this material.

1.3 Sources

The sources available for the study of Finnish rock art are rather varied. Thanks to the publications of the amateur archaeologist Pekka Kivikäs (especially those of 1995, 1999 and 2005), it is easy to get a good, general idea of the sites and the motifs depicted. However, in spite of their high quality, these publications sometimes fall short of the criteria of scientific rock art recording (cf. Whitley 2006, Chapter 2) and do not, for the most part, include such things as scaled drawings, top plans, direct tracings or systematic measurements (although especially Kivikäs 1999 does include much measured data). Only a fraction of the paintings have been published in a way that meets strict scientific standards (for references, see section 2.4 below). A few more have been well documented by archaeologists in unpublished survey and inspection reports archived at the Topographical Archives of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities (*Museovirasto*) in Helsinki. However, especially since the 1980s these reports have tended to become rather cursory, often containing only the most basic measurements and observations. It is also common that the reports do not include any tracings of the paintings, only a verbal description and accompanying photographs. For this reason, I have felt it necessary to personally visit most of the sites to complement the information acquired from publications and archived sources.

The interpretations presented here include references to the ethnohistorical sources concerning the Saami and the Finns, both of them today believed to represent the ‘aboriginal’ population of Finland. Apart from the rare Medieval sources (cf. Appendix 1), arguably the most important sources for interpretation are those pertaining to Saami religion, which were recorded by 17th and 18th century missionaries mainly in Norwegian and Swedish Lapland, and in a few cases, also in the territory of modern Finland. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these accounts were complemented by fieldwork conducted by a number of Nordic ethnographers. In rare cases, moreover, authentic first-hand accounts by the Saami themselves have been recorded (e.g., Turi 1931). However, because of the many source-critical problems associated especially with the older accounts (see Rydving 1995), I have mainly restricted myself to using the rich published literature on Saami religion.

From the point of view of this work, some of the most important publications have been the following: on the Finnish Saami, Terho Itkonen’s *Heidnische Religion und späterer Aberglaube bei den finnischen Lappen* (1946; published in Finnish in Itkonen 1948) and Juha Pentikäinen’s *Saamelaiset – pohjoisen kansan mytologia* (1995); on Saami religion in general, the books *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* by Åke Hultkrantz and Louise Bäckman (1978), *Saami Pre-Christian Religion* also by Bäckman & Hultkrantz (1985), Rafael Karsten’s *Samefolkets religion* (1952) and Håkan Rydving’s (1993) *The End of Drum-Time: Religious Change Among the Lule Sami, 1670s-1740s*; on the spirit helpers of the *noaidi*, Louise Bäckman’s *Sájva – föreställningar om hjälp- och skyddsväsen i heliga fjäll bland samerna* (1975); on Saami sacred sites, Ernst Manker’s *Lapparnas heliga ställen* (1957) and Samuli Paulaharju’s *Seitoja ja seidan palvontaa* (1932); and on Saami shaman drums, Manker’s monumental *Die Lappische Zaubertrommel I-II* (1938; 1950).

Regarding the Finnish-Karelian ethnohistorical sources, which I have used to complement the Saami material, I have mostly limited myself to the so-called *Kalevala*-metric folk poetry recorded in the 19th century. There is no need here to review the nature of this poetry or its associated source-critical problems, as these have already been discussed in [Papers IV and V](#). In the case of *Kalevala*-metric poetry, I have felt a little more confident in using the original sources, vast amounts of which have been published by the Finnish Literature Society in the 34 thick volumes of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (SKVR 1908-48, 1997). An anthology of the poems in English, entitled *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic*, has been published by Matti Kuusi *et al.* (1977). Interpretative studies on *Kalevala*-metric poetry are too numerous to list; however, the two works I have most relied on are Anna-Leena Siikala’s *Mythic Images and Shamanism* (2002a) and Martti Haavio’s *Väinämöinen – Eternal Sage* (1952).

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The main body of this work is formed by the following five papers:

- [Paper I](#). Seeing that very little had been published on Finnish rock art in languages other than Finnish or Swedish, this paper was intended as a general introduction to the subject. A second aim was to present a discussion of certain aspects of the location and iconography of the paintings in relation to a shamanistic interpretation of the art, partially based on my Master’s Thesis (Lahelma 2000).
- [Paper II](#). The main aim of this paper was the publication of the results of my excavations at the Valkeisaari rock painting in Eastern Finland – one of the few sites in Northern Europe where a prehistoric cultural layer clearly associated with a rock art site has been

found. Finds of pottery, quartz tools and prehistoric food remains are discussed. The paper also touches upon the question of anthropomorphism, animism and rock art – and the possibility of an ‘informed’ approach to interpreting the rock paintings.

- *Paper III*. This paper continues on a similar theme, exploring the similarities between the historically recorded cult of the *sieidi* and prehistoric rock art. The *sieidi* are cliffs or boulders considered sacred and alive by the Saami. The relationship between rock art and the *sieidi* is discussed and analysed in the light of contemporary theories of anthropomorphism and animism. The paper draws on the cognitive study of religion, especially the work of anthropologists Stewart Guthrie, Nurit Bird-David and Pascal Boyer.

- *Paper IV*. This paper discusses in more detail a theme already suggested in *Papers I-III*: the prospect of an ‘informed approach’ to interpreting Finnish (and Karelian) rock art. Although usually thought to lie beyond the reach of informed knowledge, it is argued here that the folklore and pre-Christian beliefs of the Baltic Finns provides ‘inside information’ concerning its meaning. In conclusion, the paper reviews some evidence suggesting that the rejection of this approach in Finnish archaeology – as well as its more positive reception in Russian archaeology – may reflect the different historical and socio-political trajectories of the two countries during the 20th century.

- *Paper V*. This paper continues the theme of *Paper IV* – the exploration of the informed approach. It takes a closer look at one of the most peculiar aspects of North European hunter-gatherer rock art: the fact that it is dominated three groups of motifs – cervids, boats and human figures – sometimes combined in ‘strange’ and ‘ambiguous’ ways. Why should this be so? In this paper, answers are sought in ethnographic material drawn chiefly from Saami religion and Finnish folk poetry. The rock painting at Pyhänpää, used as a case study, is interpreted as representing shamanic flight and the sense of co-essence between the shaman and his spirit helper beings. The creation of the painting itself is associated with the belief that such beings lived inside specific rock cliffs and that their power could be obtained through visits to rock art sites.

A theme that runs throughout the five papers that form the main body of this dissertation is the prospect of an ‘ethnographically informed’ approach – that is to say, the possibility that recent ethnographic material from Finland and the surrounding regions of Northern Eurasia may reveal ‘inside information’ concerning the meaning of this ancient art. However, many of the arguments presented herein do not necessarily require the existence of a ‘direct historical’ connection, nor does the work depend on ethnography and folklore alone.

When I began to write the dissertation, I wavered for some time between the traditional monograph form and a work based on refereed papers, a form more common in natural sciences than archaeology. For reasons that need not be discussed here, I decided to write a collection of papers rather than a monograph. This was a decision that, as it turned out, was perhaps not ideal for the kind of argument that developed in the course of writing. The article form has its limitations – in particular, limits on the number of words are problematic. Part of the problem is related to the subject matter: an adequate presentation of the ethnographic material that I have used in my interpretations of rock art, combined with the need to repeat the rather complex arguments and justifications for its use in each paper, have forced me to keep the presentation of the actual archaeological material (rock paintings) to an absolute minimum.

To compensate for this situation, I have chosen to write an introductory essay that concentrates on aspects of Finnish rock paintings that I feel were inadequately discussed in the other

papers. This introduction is divided into two parts, the first of which discusses in some detail the geographic distribution and location of the sites, their range of motifs, the dating of the art, its history of research and its prehistoric context. These, I feel, are necessary additions, especially for the non-Finnish reader, who may not have a clear idea of how the paintings can be dated, what kind of previous research has been conducted on the subject or indeed, what the Finnish rock painting sites are like in general. The discussion also forms a comprehensive academic synthesis of Finnish rock art and its history of research – a sort of a miniature monograph on the subject – which can hopefully be useful as a reference for future research. To complement this aim, I have also included an extensive catalogue of rock painting sites in Appendix 3.

The second part of this introduction brings together the main results of my dissertation with regard to interpretation. Readers who are mainly interested in what the art means may choose to move directly to this part. The discussion is a compact review of my interpretations, but should not be seen as a comprehensive summary. It seems to me that it would be a rather pointless and boring exercise to repeat all the various arguments discussed in the papers. Instead, I will present a simplified, general discussion of the possible reasons why the paintings were done, of the interpretations of different motif types and combinations, and a discussion of possible alternative interpretations. This introductory essay ends with a concluding section where the merits and problems of the main interpretative paradigms are weighed against each other.

2 LOCATION, SUBJECT MATTER AND DATING

2.1 Finnish rock paintings and the 'circumpolar rock art belt'

At the time of writing (2007), approximately 125 prehistoric rock paintings had been found in the region of modern Finland (see Appendices 2 & 3). Without exception, the paintings were made with red ochre paint, the survival of which has been enabled by silica skins (Fig. 4) that have naturally formed on top of the layer of paint (Taavitsainen & Kinnunen 1979; Kinnunen 2007). The exact method of painting is unclear. Sometimes fingers may have been used, but often it seems that the lines are too wide, long and regularly shaped to have been made with fingers, indicating the use of a brush or spatula of some sort (Terje Norsted, pers. comm). Only a few attempts have been made to study the pigment used in the paintings, and these studies done in the 1970's only go so far as to indicate that that main component of the paint is hematite or iron oxide (Ojonen 1973; Taavitsainen & Kinnunen 1979). More sophisticated chemical or physical pigment analyses would be needed to determine if other components (such as egg yolk, blood or animal grease) were mixed in the paint to serve as binders or for some symbolic reason.

The colour of the paint ranges from dark brown to bright red, orange and even yellow, but the different hues do not appear to have been used to create shading or other artistic effects. It is not entirely impossible that colours other than red have been used, since the Mesolithic cave paintings of the Urals - which may bear some relation to Finnish rock art - do feature some figures done with charcoal (Shirokov *et al.* 2000). In the case of the open-air paintings of Finland, organic pigments such as charcoal or bone white could simply have been washed away. However, there seems to be nothing in the paintings that would suggest any 'missing' elements, making it rather unlikely that any extensive use was made of pigments other than red ochre.

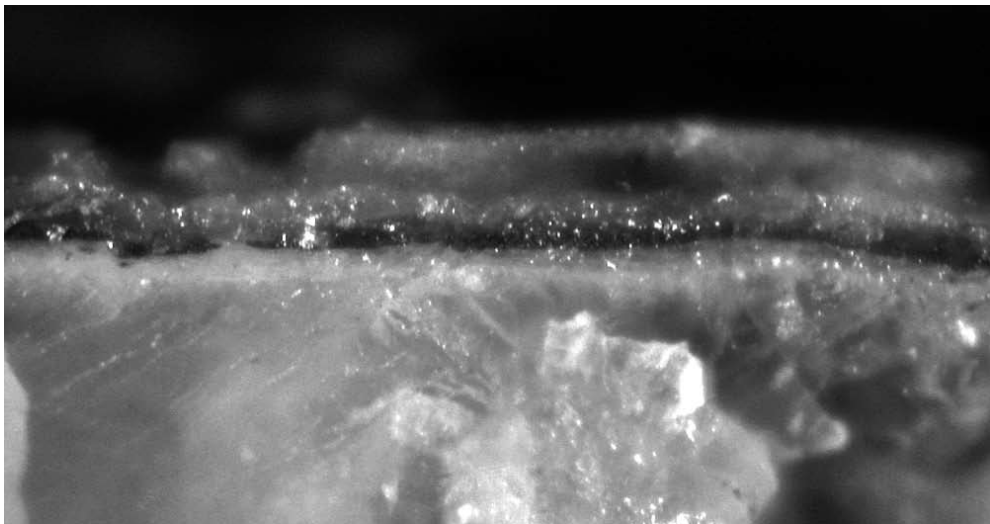


FIGURE 4. A cross-section of the rock painting of Uttamonsalmi, showing (from top to bottom) the translucent silica skin, the dark layer of red ochre paint, a lower layer of silica and the granite bedrock. The width of the image is 2 mm. Microscope image courtesy of Kari A. Kinnunen.

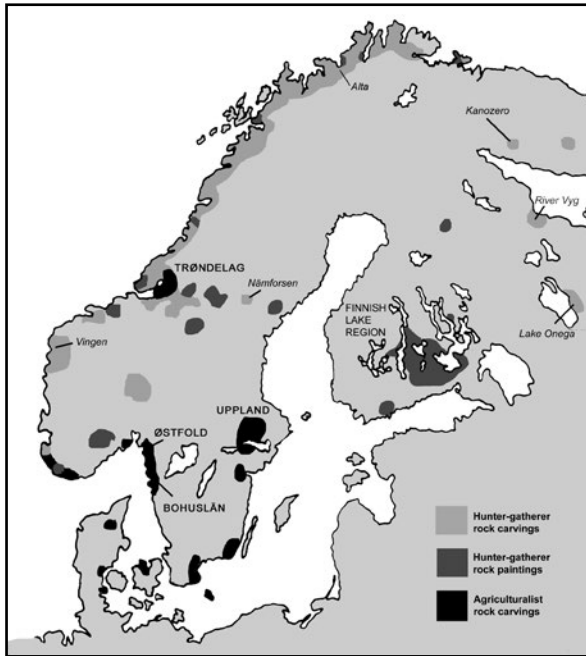


FIGURE 5. A map of the main rock art regions in North-Western Europe. Names written in capital letters refer to provinces or regions particularly rich in rock art. Names in italics show a number of geographically limited but important rock art clusters. Note that the map is not all-inclusive but merely strives to illustrate the general distribution.

Stylistically and phenomenologically, the closest parallels to the Finnish sites can be found in Northern Sweden (Kivikäs 2003). Some forty red ochre rock paintings, often located on similar cliffs and in environments as the Finnish sites, have been found mainly in the region of Norrland (Fandén 2001; Lindgren 2004; Viklund 2004). Similar red ochre rock paintings are also found in different parts of Norway, including Telemark (Slinning 2002), Finnmark (Schanche 2004), the caves of North-Western Norway (Sognnes 1982; Bjerck 1995) and elsewhere (Hallström 1938; Mandt & Løvdøen 2005). Although famous rock carving sites have been found in Russian Karelia (Ravdonikas 1936; 1938; Savvateyev 1977; Poikalainen & Ernits 1998), no rock paintings have so far been found in European Russia. This situation may well reflect a lack of fieldwork as well as of public awareness of rock paintings in Northern Russia. Even so, the fact remains that the closest parallels to the Finnish sites in the east are found only in the Ural Mountains, ca. 1000 km east of Finland (Chernechov 1964; 1971; Shirokov *et al.* 2000).

It is, however, obvious that the Finnish rock painting sites are but a part of the much wider phenomenon of northern hunter-gatherer rock art (Fig. 5), which covers a vast area of Northern Fennoscandia (Kare 2001a; Lindqvist 1994), Northern Russia and Siberia (Devlet & Devlet 2005) and extends all the way to Japan and Korea (Sarvas 1975). Indeed, the phenomenon that might with good reason be identified as a ‘circumpolar rock art belt’ appears to continue in North America as well. Red ochre rock paintings representing mainly elk, boats and human figures, done on lakeshore cliffs, have been found in parts of Canada and Minnesota (Dewdney & Kidd 1967; Rajnovich 1994). These sites and the figures presented in them are, in many respects, almost identical with those of Finnish rock paintings. Some of the rock carvings of Canada, such as those found near Peterborough in Ontario (Vastokas & Vastokas 1973), are likewise astonishingly similar to Fennoscandian rock carvings. Whether all of this circumpolar rock art is actually somehow culturally inter-related, as Gutorm Gjessing (1944) already suggested in the 1940s, is an intriguing question that has not been sufficiently examined in later research. However, it falls outside the scope of this work.

2.2 Location and geographical distribution

Nearly all Finnish rock paintings are located in a lake environment, typically on steep, exposed surfaces of bedrock, often rising straight from the water. Indeed, this close association with water is one of the most characteristic features of Finnish rock art (cf. Kivikäs 1995: 19). The painted cliffs are often some of the most imposing natural formations in the surrounding territory and are used as landmarks even by modern-day boaters. Aside from rock cliffs, a number of paintings have also been found on large boulders, but these are also usually located on lakeshores. Rock surfaces that face south, south-west or west have been preferred (Fig. 6) – paintings facing any other general direction are rare exceptions. According to Kivikäs, most sites are located along water-routes and passaged sheltered from the wind:

In long, channel-like lakes, the painted panel is often found at a narrow point of the lake. In this respect, typical examples are, e.g., Sarkavesi in Mäntyharju and Ala-Rieveli in the Heinola rural commune. In wider lakes such as Karijärvi in the municipality of Jaala, Pyhäjärvi in Uukuniemi and Kivijärvi in Luumäki, the potential spot is correspondingly in a narrows where one or more islands divide the lake into separate open spaces. [...] There are but few rock art localities, the siting of which cannot be directly based on their location along a water-route or by a neck of land leading from one lake to another.¹ (Kivikäs 1995: 18; my translation)

A visitor to Finnish rock painting sites is often struck by the difficulty of access, as many of them are located on islands, in remote wooded regions and rocky terrains that lie outside modern habitation centres or areas of economic exploitation. But it is not easy to judge if the sites were also perceived as remote or inaccessible during the Stone Age. After all, in Stone Age Finland using a boat would have been the most convenient way to travel and most of the painting sites are easily accessed by water. What we can say, however, is that, at least in the light of present knowledge, most paintings are not located in the immediate vicinity of dwelling sites. In the Saimaa region, the mean distance between a rock painting and the nearest Stone Age dwelling site is more than three kilometres (Ipsen 1995: 391; Seitsonen 2005a: 6). Thus, unlike at Lake Onega (Lobanova 1995), Nämforsen (Käck 2001) and the River Vyg (Savvateyev 1970), where intensive occupation sites have been found right next to the art, the Finnish sites are located at some distance from the day-to-day living environments of Stone Age communities.

The archaeologist Timo Sepänmaa (2007: 108–11) writes that the vast majority of Finnish rock paintings are evidently associated with the shorelines, drainage areas and outlets of ancient and now

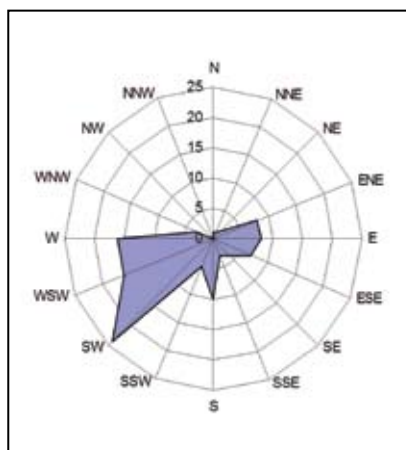


FIGURE 6. A radar diagram of the orientation of 110 rock painting sites in Finland. Based on Kivikäs (1995; 1999) with some information kindly provided by Kimmo Puranen.

¹ “Pitkissä ja välämissä järvissä kuvakenttä osuu usein järvikapeikon kohdalle. Tässä mielessä tyypillisiä ovat mm. Mäntyharjun Sarkavesi ja Heinolan mlk:n Ala-Rieveli. Leveämissä järvissä, kuten Jaalan Karijärvi, Uukuniemen Pyhäjärvi ja Luumäen Kivijärvi, otollinen kohta on vastaavasti kaventumassa, jossa yksi tai useampi saari jakaa järvaltaan selkiin. [...] On vain harvoja kalliomaalauspaikkoja, joiden valintaa ei suoraan voi perustella niiden sijainnilla vesireitin tai järveltä toiselle johtavan kannaksen tuntumassa.”

sometimes vanished lakes, and especially those associated with the so-called ‘Ancient Lakes’ of Päijänne and Saimaa (bodies of water that were considerably larger than the present lakes by those names). The outlets of these lakes formed important water-routes (and sometimes still do) that allowed easy access throughout large parts of Finland. In addition to this, the paintings are, according to Sepänmaa, associated with the following elements: 1) smaller water-routes running between the coastal regions and the inland, 2) watersheds between large inland waters, and 3) watersheds in North-Eastern Finland that allow access among several important bodies of water, including the Gulf of Bothnia in the west and the White Sea in the east. The painting at Halsvuori near Jyväskylä (Central Finland) is, according to Sepänmaa (2007: 110), unique in that it is found on the shore of a small, isolated lake that seems to lie quite far away from any obvious water-routes. He speculates that instead, it may have been associated with a land route and notes that the cliff itself is certainly the most imposing in the surrounding region. This painting is exceptional also with regard to the motifs depicted (cf. chapter 4 below).

The overall distribution of rock paintings is thus heavily concentrated in South-Eastern Finland (Fig. 7). It is not impossible that the geographical distribution is partly a reflection of more intensive fieldwork done in the Lake District, but this is becoming increasingly unlikely. There is much to indicate that a public awareness of rock art exists even in Southern or South-Western Finland (e.g., Hyvönen 2002), but only a couple of sites (e.g., Pukkila 1990) have been found in these regions. Interestingly, it seems that, so far, none of the paintings can be confidently associated with the ancient shores of the Baltic Sea. For instance, in the province of Kymenlaakso, where numerous paintings are found in the Finnish interior, systematic efforts by the archaeologist Timo Miettinen (2000: 48) to find rock art in otherwise potential cliffs associated with ancient sea levels have yielded no result. The paintings found in the Helsinki region – Juusjärvi, Vitträsk and Jäniskallio – are possible exceptions to this rule, as are the paintings of Lohja (Karstun linnavuori) and Paimio (Rekottilan linnavuori), but the possibility that they were painted on a lake near the sea cannot be excluded (cf. fig. 1 in Luho 1964).

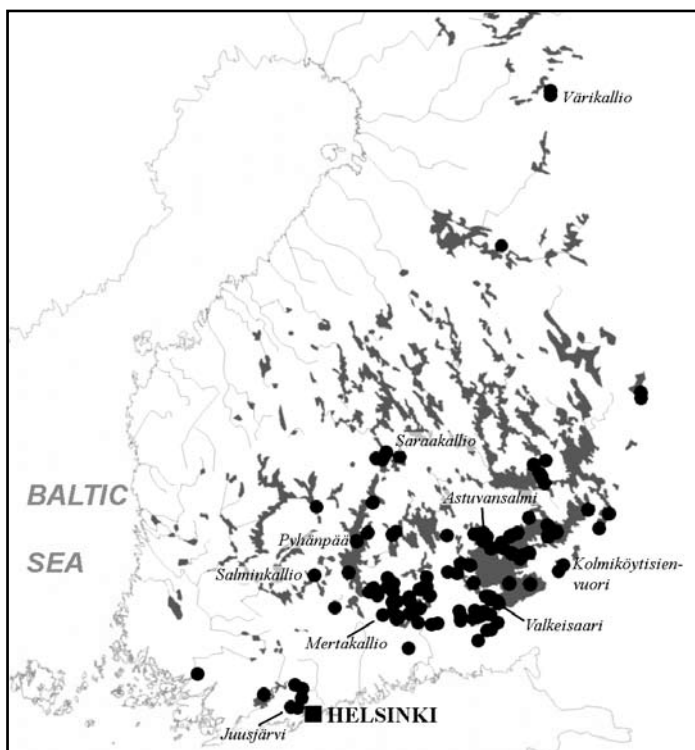


FIGURE 7. The geographical distribution of rock painting sites in Finland at the time of writing (2007), with some of the sites discussed in the text. For a more detailed map, see Appendix 3 (p. 279)

In any case, it is clear that the vast majority of rock paintings in Finland are associated with fresh-water lakes. As Miettinen (2000: 48) points out, this could mean that, for some reason, only the inland population created rock paintings. Given the fact that idiosyncratic developments in, for example, pottery styles can be distinguished in the coastal regions at least since the Early Comb Ware period (Edgren 1966; Huurre 1998), and that these differences between the coast and the hinterland continue throughout much of Finnish prehistory (even extending into historical times), this may be a significant observation. It may suggest a different ethno-linguistic situation or, at least, different patterns of culture along the shores of the Baltic and in the Lake District of the interior during the Subneolithic.

However, such cultural differences may form only a part of the explanation. The geologist Kari A. Kinnunen (2007) has noted that although upright rock cliffs suitable for painting are found almost throughout Finland (excluding very flat regions like the Ostrobothnian plains), the paintings tend to be found only on such cliffs where the protective silica skin was most likely to develop. In other words, they may have survived only in particular kinds of cliffs. These cliffs are typically related to Pre-Cambrian fractures of the bedrock, found in ancient earthquake regions that typically run in a NW-SE –direction. Many of the cliffs in these fractures have later been worn smooth by glaciers, which generally moved from North-West to South-East, forming an excellent ‘canvas’ for rock paintings. When the ice melted, the fractures were filled with fresh water, forming the lake regions of Central and Eastern Finland.

The geographical distribution of rock art in Finland thus seems to be a result of at least two factors: taphonomy and regional differences in prehistoric cultural practices (cf. also Fig. 8). As we saw, it is precisely in the Lake Region that granite cliffs are most likely to develop a protective silica skin. If rock paintings existed in the western part of the country, they are likely to have been destroyed. But this does not seem to explain why paintings are not found on the ancient seashore cliffs of South-Eastern Finland, for example. Here we are forced to conclude that the production of rock art was a part of the cultural repertoire of the hunter-fishermen of the interior, but (for one reason or another) apparently not of the seal-hunters of the Baltic Sea coast.

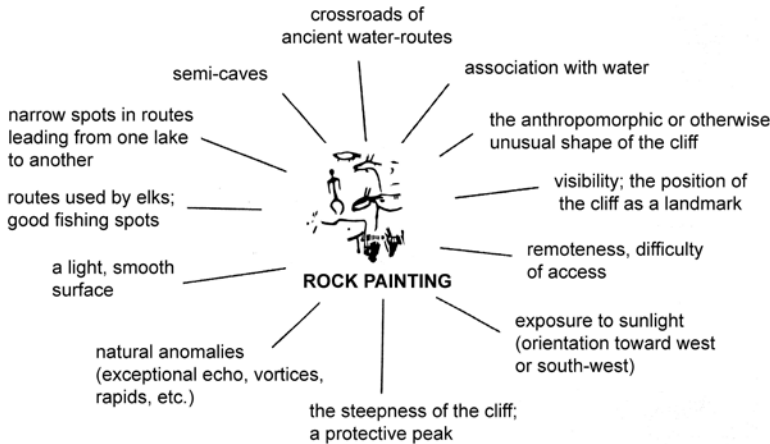


FIGURE 8. Some of the factors possibly affecting the location of Finnish rock paintings (from Lahelma 2001).

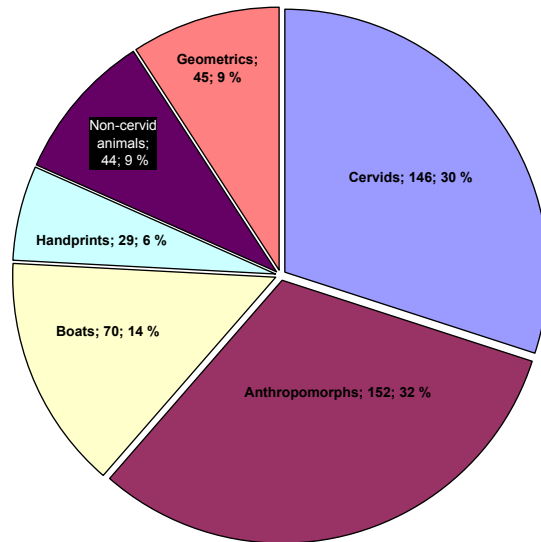


FIGURE 9. The range of motifs depicted in Finnish rock art. Based on information on all sites known in October 2007.

2.3 The range of motifs

If one were to briefly characterise the subject matter of Finnish rock art, it could be said to consist mainly of simple ‘stick-figure’ images of humans, elk and boats in rather confusing groups of seemingly unrelated images. At first sight, the art seems monotonous, almost boring. Nothing seems to ‘happen’ in the paintings: the different motifs do not form any obvious narratives or even interact much with each other. Sometimes they have been painted on top of each other. Only after a closer study, does it become apparent that this seeming monotony in fact hides subtle differences and variations that appear meaningful. While most images do not seem to interact with each other, sometimes they do combine to form scenes of two or more images (Kivikäs 2000) that offer important clues to interpretation.

Although humans, elk and boats comprise ca. 76% of all the images (Fig. 9), the remaining 24% consists of a fairly varied range of images. Not all humans, boats and elk are the same, either. In this study, I have distinguished ten different categories of human figures and nine categories of elk (see Appendix 2), but it would be too easy to list more. Finally, although there is a lack of large narrative scenes, many paintings do feature combinations of motifs, such as elk figures with antlers that are formed by a boat, or pairs of human figures, where one is often larger than the other. Such combinations are clearly intentional because they are repeated at several different rock painting sites.

For the purposes of this study, I counted all the different images at all Finnish rock painting sites known in May 2007. The numeric data is presented in Appendix 2. Antero Kare has published a similar survey rather recently (Kare 2001b), but his way of counting and categorising the motifs differs considerably from mine. This survey is not necessarily better in any way (except for the fact that it is more up-to-date), just better suited for the purposes of my study. The images were counted based on a rough typological diagram (also presented in Appendix 2), in which they were divided into six main categories – cervids, anthropomorphs, boats, handprints, non-cervid animals and geometric signs – each of which was in turn subdivided

into a number of subcategories. The total number of identified figures was 486, out of which anthropomorphs (32%) formed, by a small margin, the largest group, followed by cervids (30%) and boats (14%).

Although I feel that the need for numeric data is obvious to understanding the nature of this art, there are several major problems with these kinds of calculations. Although at some sites the images are fairly easy to discern and categorize, a number of sites present formidable barriers to any attempt at recording or counting the painted motifs. Many of the paintings are blurred or faded, and the motifs may be fragmentary, superimposed or otherwise difficult to identify. Weather conditions clearly affect the visibility of some paintings, as the silica skin covering the red ochre paint varies from translucent to milky depending on humidity, temperature and exposure to sunlight. As Kivikäs (1995: 24) emphasises, each visit to a rock painting site is likely to reveal a slightly different range of motifs, making the reliable, comprehensive documentation of a rock painting site an almost impossible task. Consequently, each attempt to count the sum total of Finnish rock art images is also likely to produce a different result.

Even using the same documentation, identifications are subjective and calculations can vary considerably. I chose to count only those images that are clear and distinct to me, resulting in numbers that are somewhat lower than those reached by other scholars. For example, using the same documentation, Taavitsainen (1978: 184) counted 66 images at Astuvansalmi but I could only find 56 clearly identifiable images – and our identifications of some motif types differ. While Taavitsainen counted 61 images at Väräkallio, Kare (2001b: 104) reached a number of 59 and I was left with 44. Perhaps most difficult of all, the paintings of the large and important site of Saraakallio (which is not included in Taavitsainen's paper) seem almost impossible to record and count adequately. Kare (2001b: 108) counts 102 images at Saraakallio, which may well be close to the truth – but I was only able to identify 58 images with any certainty. However, one should not exaggerate these problems, as most sites are relatively unambiguous. Thus, even though the absolute numbers presented here are not exact, the percentages are likely to be a rather reliable reflection of the real situation.

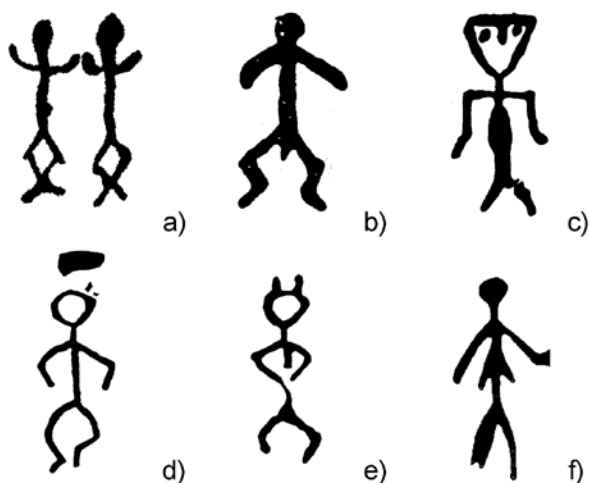


FIGURE 10. Examples of different types of human figures in Finnish rock art: a) two dot-headed anthropomorphs with raised hands and legs crossed at Juusjärvi (Luho 1964); b) a phallic (?) male with a dot-shaped head, Uittamonsalmi (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976); c) a human figure with a triangular head, Väräkallio (Taavitsainen 1979); d) a human figure with a ring-shaped head and a 'halo', Uittamonsalmi (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976); e) a horned anthropomorph with a ring-shaped or triangular head, Keltavuori (Taavitsainen 1977b); f) a female figure, Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969).

2.3.1 *Anthropomorphs*

By a small margin, the most common motif type turned out to be the human figure (altogether 152 images). These figures are highly conventionalised, most often showing person in frontal position, hands either raised in the ‘adorant’ position (Fig. 10a) or extended to the side (Figs. 10b-e; both alternatives are equally common). Legs are usually bent from the knees inwards. The shape of the head varies to some degree: it can be fully painted (Fig. 10a), ring-shaped (Fig. 10d) or triangular (Figs. 10c & e). The dot-shaped variant is by far the most common, comprising almost 80% of all human figures. In altogether twelve cases (8%), two strokes resembling horns have been painted on the head of the human figure (Fig. 10e).

A number of exceptional human figures enrich this group. In four cases, the human figure has been painted upside-down (Fig. 25b). Five figures show the human body in profile. The two female figures found at Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969, groups *f* and *k*; cf. Fig. 10f) are the only clear examples of their kind in Finnish rock art. A third possible female figure was found in 2007 at the site of Vuorilampi, but the painting is very faint and the identification uncertain. One of the Astuvansalmi women is exceptional for a second reason also: she holds a bow in her hand, thus being the only human figure to carry a recognisable weapon or tool. Male figures indicated by a phallus sometimes also occur (Fig. 10b), but unlike in Scandinavian Bronze Age carvings or some figures at the Karelian carving sites, this aspect is not pronounced. In the vast majority of cases, the sex of the human figure is not indicated in any way.

2.3.2 *Cervids*

Images of cervids (altogether 146 instances) are somewhat more varied than human figures. Although most of the animals would appear to be elk (*Alces alces*), it is possible that some of them portray wild reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) (Rankama 1997; Korteniemi 1997) – hence the use of the term ‘cervid’. The degree of realism varies somewhat, from the rather dynamic depictions of running elk at Konnivesi and Saraakallio (Figs. 11b & f) to elk with a ‘box-shaped’ body (Figs. 11c-d) or strangely distorted proportions (Fig. 11e). Some images, such as the clumsily painted figure from Jäniskallio (Sarvas 1970a) or the schematic stick-figure animals of Väräkallio (Taavitsainen 1979) and Uittamonsalmi (Fig. 11a), are only barely recognisable as elk.

The paintings of cervids can be divided into three main types: stick-figure animals (with the body formed by a mere line), outline paintings and fully painted figures. Numerically, the most common type is the stick-figure (42%), followed by the outline figures (37%) and the fully painted cervids (21%). The high proportion of stick-figure elk is affected by the large and rather exceptional site of Väräkallio (Taavitsainen 1979), where most elk are painted in the stick-figure style.

A clear majority, or about 68%, of the cervids are shown facing left, which is not surprising as it would be more natural for a right-handed person to draw an animal facing left. However, the proportion of elk facing right (32%) seems too large to be a mere reflection of the fact that some of the painters must have been left-handed. The orientation of the animal may thus carry some meaning that is lost to us. In at least one case at Saraakallio, an ‘elk-figure’ has two heads – one at each end (Taavitsainen 1978: 189) – as well as a back composed of triangles, indicating that at least some elk figures do not represent animals of the real world.

2.3.3 *Boats*

The boat figures (altogether 68 of them) typically consist of a curved line together with a number of vertical lines rising from the curve (‘crew-strokes’), evidently representing the crew

of the boat (cf. Fig. 4 in Paper V). There is variation in both the shape of bottom, which may be almost flat (as at Myllylampi; see Miettinen 1992: 26) and the shape of the crew-strokes, which may be conical rather than straight. Examples of the latter include images from the sites of Patalahti (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 73) and Saraakallio (Kivikäs 1995: 216). The number of crew-strokes varies from two to twenty-five, but typically (in 43% of the boat figures) falls between six and ten.

The archaeologist Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1978) has argued that the ‘boat images’ should in fact be interpreted as representations of elk antlers – an idea that can be found in many subsequent publications (e.g., Edgren 1984: 64; Kivikäs 2000: 88). It is rather clear, though, that this idea is mistaken, as in some cases (ca. 12% of the figures) the boat has a recognisable elk-head figure in the prow. Although much rarer than in the hunter-gatherer rock art of the neighbouring regions, the presence of such figureheads in Finnish rock paintings shows that the boats are indeed conceptually related to similar elk-headed boat images in places like Nämforsen, Alta and Lake Onega. The question of why in some cases the boat forms the ‘antlers’ of the elk is rather more complex and is discussed in detail in [Paper V](#).

2.3.4 Non-cervid animals

Animals other than elk (or deer) are comparatively rarely depicted, forming only 9% of all rock art images, but the instances where they do occur provide important breaks in the elk-man-boat –monotony of much of the art. To begin with, some paintings show animals that are clearly

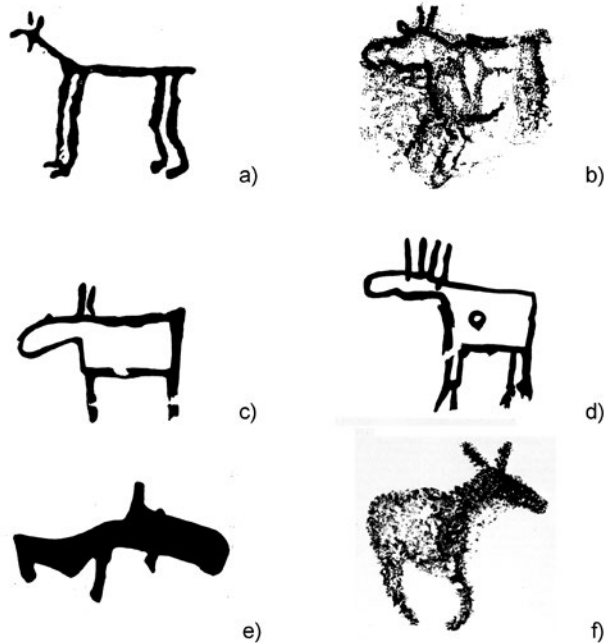


FIGURE 11. Examples of the six main types of cervid figures in Finnish rock art: a) a ‘stick-figure elk’ from Uittamonsalmi (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976); b) a ‘dynamic’ elk painted in outline (apparently with internal divisions in the body), Saraakallio (Kivikäs 1999); c) an ‘box-shaped’ elk painted in outline, Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969); d) an outline-painting of an elk, with four ‘horns’ and a heart marked by a circle, Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969); e) a fully painted elk with an exaggerated head, Kurtinvuori (Rauhala 1976); f) a ‘dynamic’, fully painted elk, Konnivesi Haukavuori (Miettinen 1986).

mammalian, but some detail (such as a tail) makes it equally clear that they cannot be elk. The number of such images is small (altogether only 13) and the species appear to be varied. For example, in the painting at Halsvuori (Miettinen 1982), we see two human figures, both of them carrying some smallish mammal (beaver or squirrel?) by the neck (Fig. 36). The painting from Leveälähti (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 69) includes an animal with short legs, curved back and a short tail (Fig. 12e), perhaps a wolverine or badger (or a lizard even, supposing that the boat figure next to is no indicator of scale). An image at Uutelanvuori II apparently shows a fox (Miettinen 2000: 104; see also Fig. 12a). Possible depictions of a bear are found at two sites, Väräkallio (Taavitsainen 1979: 112, group c) and Astuvansalmi (Miettinen & Willamo 2007: 63), and at Viherinkoski we find a painting apparently of a wolf or dog (Kivikäs 2005: 55). However, in most of these cases, all that can be said with certainty is that the images show non-cervid mammals, but their precise identification remains uncertain.

Clear representations of fish (altogether 10 images) occur at three sites only – Juusjärvi (Luhio 1964), Kapasaari (Miettinen 2000: 131) and Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969: 13, group e) – but it is possible that they have been more numerous, as some seemingly non-figurative spots of paint may be weathered images of fish. Perhaps significantly, the exact species of the fish can sometimes be identified: in most cases it appears to be pike (*Esox lucius*; see Fig. 25). Images of birds are equally rare, the only unambiguous representations being on the painted boulder of Rapakko (Koponen *et al.* 1993: 83; cf. fig 12b). These two long-necked birds probably represent swans, although other long-necked water-birds cannot be excluded. A poorly preserved image at the site of Lautmäki (Kivikäs 2005: 163) may conceivably represent a similar, long-necked water-bird. An image at Ruominkapia, earlier interpreted as a bird (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976: 45), may also be mentioned. However, the cross-shaped image might equally well be interpreted as a geometric sign.

Some of the paintings also depict reptiles. The site of Saraakallio includes a figure that resembles a lizard climbing upwards (Kivikäs 2005: 72), and lizards also appear to be represented at Väräkallio (Taavitsainen 1979; see Fig. 12c). If these are actually representations of lizards, then the species depicted must be *Zootoca vivipara* (Finn. *sisilisko*). Images of snakes are more common than of lizards, but here it is also often difficult to draw a line between a snake figure and a geometric zigzag-motif (Figs. 30 & 32). Only a few sites show snakes that appear anatomically accurate, but it seems apparent that zigzag-lines were used to represent snakes because snakes and zigzag-lines occur in analogous scenes with human figures. For example, at the site of Kolmiköytisienvuori (Fig. 27), a ‘falling’ human figure is juxtaposed with a snake (Miettinen 1977) and at Mertakallio (Fig. 30a), a similar scene shows a falling human and a zigzag-line (Ojonen 1973: 39). Similarly, at Keltavuori (Fig. 30c) a human figure is holding a snake in his or her hand (Taavitsainen 1977b), where as at Salminkallio (Fig. 30b) the human figure holds a zigzag-line (Kivikäs 2005: 53). It is worth noting, too, that the snake species depicted is clearly the adder (*Vipera berus*), which has a prominent zigzag-pattern on its back.

2.3.5 Geometric figures and handprints

Various geometric signs form about 9% of all rock painting figures, although here again identification is difficult. Some seemingly ‘abstract’ figures may be fragmentary remains of representational images - or they may represent something that we simply are not able to identify. Conversely, some lines painted amongst representational images may form geometric figures, but one hesitates to count them as such because of poor preservation and difficulties in identifying the figures.

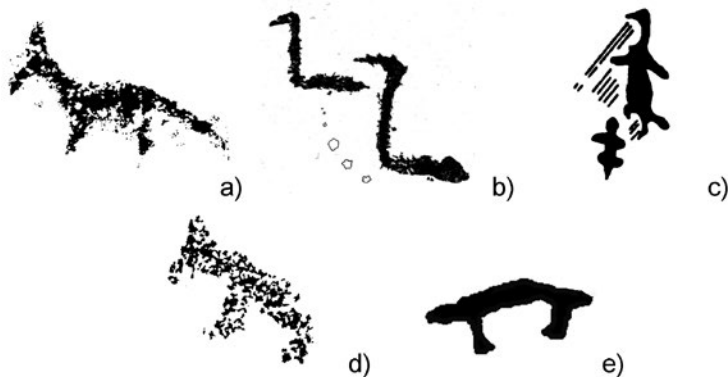


FIGURE 12. Examples of birds, lizards and non-cervid mammals: a) a fox (?) from the painting at Uutelanvuori II (Miettinen 2000); b) two water-birds (swans?) from Rapakko (Kivikäs 2000); c) two lizards (?) from Värrikallio (Taavitsainen 1979); d) a non-cervid mammal (bear?) from Vesitorninmäki (Miettinen 2000); e) a non-cervid mammal from Leveälähti (drawn by the author based on a photograph).

Many of the geometric signs (such as the elaborate net-figures of Vitträsk) can be found only at a single site, but some are repeated at more than one site. The most common type is a series of two or more parallel vertical lines: fourteen examples can be cited from nine different sites, including Astuvansalmi where figure group *a* is formed by seven vertical lines (Sarvas 1969: 10). Other geometric signs include groups of horizontal lines (four examples) and oblique crosses, seven examples of which are found at least at four different sites.

Finally, a significant group of images (6% of all) is formed by the handprints, which are all ‘positive’, that is, they have been made by coating a hand in red ochre paint and pressing it on the rock. Not all handprints are preserved well enough to ascertain whether the right or left hand was used. Of those that are, 62% appear to be impressions of the right hand. This percentage is somewhat lower than the percentage of right-handed people in most modern Western populations, which according to one study ranges between 75 and 85% (Hardyck & Petrinovich 1977).

2.4 A short history of research

2.4.1 Beginnings

A brief, handwritten note in the archives of the Finnish National Board of Antiquities in Helsinki records a phone call by the composer Jean Sibelius (1865-1957). The note, originally written in Swedish² and archived in 1911, reads as follows:

An old inscription on a rock cliff by artist Parviainen’s villa at Masaby, Vitträsk. Parviainen has a telephone and can show the site. TT etc. [Reported by] Composer Sibelius by telephone 25/1 11.

Sibelius’ chance discovery of the painting of Vitträsk, located some 20 km west of Helsinki, was the first authentic find of prehistoric rock art in Finland. As we shall see, it was a rather

2 “Äldre inskrift i en klippta vid artisten Parviainens villa i Masaby i Hvitträsk. P. har telefon och kan visa stället. TT etc. Kompositören Sibelius i telefon 25/11 11.”

extraordinary find: even today, no parallels have been found in Finland to the rug-like net-figures of Vitträsk, but an astonishingly similar figure has been found on the shores of the Arctic Sea at Alta in Northern Norway (Helskog 1988: 101), more than a thousand kilometres north-west of Vitträsk (cf. section 2.5.2 below).

It seems a little odd that the first recorded discovery of rock art in Finland took place as late as the beginning of the 20th century. After all, Finland was until 1809 a part of the Swedish kingdom – a country where the first antiquarian records of rock art were already made in the 17th century (Hallström 1960: ix). A bit later but still early on, the first report of prehistoric rock art in Norway was made in 1788 (Hallström 1938: 22) and in Russian Karelia in 1848 (Ravdonikas 1936). As a consequence, Finnish antiquarians were likely to have been aware of rock art for several centuries, but to the best of my knowledge, the first reports concerning rock art in Finland were made only in mid-19th century. Among these early antiquarian reports, the name of the patriot and humanist Carl Axel Gottlund (1796-1875) turns up often (e.g., Gottlund 1857; 1858; 1859; 1864). The writings of Gottlund and others (e.g., Killinen 1890: 101), who described supposed ‘rock carvings’ in the parishes of Kitee, Padasjoki, Lammi, Sortavala and elsewhere, testify to an awareness of rock art and runic inscriptions as well as to serious efforts to find such ‘monuments’ in Finland also. Yet it seems probable that none of these early reports actually described prehistoric rock carvings. In all likelihood they recorded either recent graffiti or geological rock formations mistakenly thought to be made by humans, but unfortunately many of these early discoveries were so poorly documented that later researchers have not been able to relocate and study them.

Despite this lack of success, efforts to find rock art continued in the early 20th century, as evidenced, e.g., by a small note published by the distinguished Finnish archaeologist Aarne Tallgren (1911). Tallgren ‘passionately’ urged the inhabitants of South-Western Finland to search for Scandinavian-style Bronze Age rock carvings in their surroundings. Reporting such finds would, according to Tallgren, be a “great patriotic accomplishment” (Tallgren 1911: 236). A little later, he widened the area where rock carvings might be found to the region of the Vuoksi river in Eastern Finland, the areas around the towns of Kuopio and Jyväskylä and the rivers of Northern Ostrobothnia – regions that, according to him, appeared to have contacts with the ‘Ural-Altaic world’ (Tallgren 1920).

It took six years before Sibelius’ discovery at Vitträsk was finally studied and documented by a professional archaeologist, Aarne Europaeus (1917; 1922). Europaeus recognised the importance of the find and contacted the leading Nordic authority of the time, the Swede Gustaf Hallström. Hallström took an interest in the discovery and visited Vitträsk in 1939. He produced a tracing and, thirteen years later, published a paper on the find where he pointed out the similarity between the figures of Vitträsk and certain geometric figures of North Scandinavian rock carvings, such as Bardal in Western Norway (Hallström 1952). A few years later, moreover, he devoted an entire chapter to Finnish rock art in his influential book *Monumental Art of Northern Sweden from the Stone Age* (Hallström 1960: 333-36). This amount of attention is surprising given the fact that ‘Finnish rock art’ at the time only consisted of a single rock painting, a somewhat dubious rock carving at the Marraskoski rapids in Northern Finland and a few carved stone items. The carving at Marraskoski, so far the only serious candidate for prehistoric carved rock art in Finland, has subsequently been destroyed. It consisted of a single figure (for photographs, see Taskinen 2000) that in fact probably dated to the historical period. Additional ‘figures’ from the site, reported by Aarni Erä-Esko (1954), were evidently geological in origin, and a recent survey of the banks of the river failed to bring to light any more rock carvings from the site (Forsberg & Walderhaug 2004).

2.4.2 *The decades of professional research (1960s and 70)*

It took five more decades before the next discovery of rock art was made in Finland (Luho 1964). The painting at Juusjärvi, located rather close to Vitträsk, was found by Veikko Lehtisalo in a routine archaeological survey conducted in the summer of 1963. Apparently, the painting had been known to the locals for a long time, but it was thought to be recent graffiti made by children or workmen who had been building a nearby power-line. Following this discovery, both archaeologists and amateurs began to show an increasing interest in rock art. Significantly, the next site (Valkeisaari; see [Paper II](#)) was found in 1966 by a layman who – inspired by a newspaper article about the Juusjärvi find – had spent several summers searching for rock art around his hometown of Lappeenranta on Lake Saimaa (Luho 1968a; 1968b). These dedicated efforts by laymen have proven to be very beneficial for Finnish rock art research.

In the following decade or so, many of the most significant sites were found, foremost among them the discoveries of Astuvansalmi in 1968, Verla in 1974, Saraakallio in 1975 and Väräkallio in 1977 (see fig. 2 in Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004). Although the two first-mentioned sites were found by professional archaeologists, it is characteristic of this era that many if not most discoveries were reported by amateurs, who as of yet had few scientific ambitions. The amateurs typically acted as informants for the professionals, who in most cases promptly published the finds in a series of articles (Sarvas 1969; 1970a; 1970b; Ojonen 1973; Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1975; 1976; Taavitsainen 1977 a & b; 1979; 1981; Taavitsainen & Kinnunen 1979; Rauhalala 1976; Pohjakallio 1976; 1977; Miettinen 1977). These papers reveal an enthusiasm for a new and fascinating type of archaeological remains in the country. Although most of the papers were mainly descriptive in nature, they were complemented by a series of more reflective papers (e.g., Taavitsainen 1978; Luho 1970; 1971; Siikala 1980; 1981; Núñez 1981; Sarvas 1975), where the meaning of the paintings was given serious consideration.

For some reason, the enthusiasm of the 1960s and 70s waned among archaeologists towards the end of the 70s and came to an almost complete standstill in the 1980s and 90s. Only a handful of archaeologists – among them Timo Miettinen (e.g., 1982; 1986; 1990a; 1992), Juhani Grönhagen (1991; 1994), Milton Núñez (1994; 1995) and the Dane Jens Ipsen (1993; 1995) – continued to show any interest in Finnish rock art. The reasons for this loss of interest are unclear, since the amateurs still kept on reporting new sites, but a somewhat delayed influence from the positivist currents of New Archaeology may have played a role. Rock art apparently came to be viewed as too speculative a subject for “serious” archaeology (J.-P. Taavitsainen pers. comm). The fact that some important sites – most importantly Saraakallio – were never scientifically published may also have been a factor impeding serious research.

2.4.3 *The amateurs take over (1980s and 90s)*

Whatever the reasons behind the neglect of rock art shown by professional archaeologists, the fact is that in the 1980s and 90s, the study of Finnish rock art was taken over by amateurs. Until the late 1980s, amateur enthusiasts had been content to search for rock painting sites, leaving the scientific recording and publication of the sites to the professionals. But when the interests of the professionals shifted elsewhere, amateurs began to publish their documentations and interpretations on their own. This is not to say that the development has been negative. On the contrary, much of the amateur work has been characterised by a high level of scholarly ambition and dedication to the subject. The work of Pekka Kivikäs (b. 1932), an elementary school art teacher from Jyväskylä, deserves a special mention. Aided by a handful of dedicated rock art enthusiasts such as Risto Kupiainen and Seppo Kinos, his tireless efforts over the past twenty years have finally brought the Finnish rock art tradition the attention and appreciation it deserves.



FIGURE 13. The interest shown by the archaeological community towards rock art in the 1970s was shared by the general public, as evidenced by the 1975 competition 'Find your own rock painting' arranged by the popular magazine *Viikkosanomat*, which resulted in the discovery of nine previously unknown rock painting sites. From the personal archives of prof. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen.

During the 1990s and the early 21st century, Kivikäs' drawings and photographs have been extensively published in a series of excellent books (Kivikäs 1990; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2000; 2003 and 2005), which have made the art accessible to both researchers and the general public alike. Aside from Kivikäs, other prolific amateur researchers involved in similar projects include a second elementary school teacher, Eero Autio (1924-2002), whose publications (e.g., Autio 1983; 1988; 1989; 1991; 1993a & b; 1995; 1998) have mainly dealt with interpretation, the contemporary artist Antero Kare (2001b; 2002) and Eero Siljander, who has made his impact mainly through lectures and excursions. The role of the eminent Estonian rock art researcher Väino Poikalainen, who has been instrumental in organising amateur rock art research in Finland, must also be mentioned. Thus, even as professional archaeologists lost their interest in rock art, these and other amateur researchers managed to bring Finnish rock paintings back into public interest and have attracted a considerable number of followers – a fact that in 1998 resulted in the founding of the Finnish Society for Prehistoric Art (*Suomen muinaistaideseura ry.*, <http://www.rockart.fi/>).

2.4.4 Recent developments

At the beginning of the millennium, professional archaeologists have again begun to work with rock art – a development no doubt partly inspired by the efforts of the amateurs (this dissertation is no exception). Studies have recently been published concerning the dating of the art (Jussila 1999; Seitsonen 2005a & b; in press), its history of research (Saavalainen 1999b; Taskinen 2000; Lahelma 2007a), methods of study (Poutiainen & Sepänmaa 2000; Taskinen 2005; 2007a & b) and interpretation (Carpelan 2000; Lahelma 2001; 2003; 2005; Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003; Taskinen 2006; as well as the papers included in this dissertation). Some fieldwork projects have also been carried out, including surveys (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004; Forsberg & Walderhaug 2004; Poutiainen 2007) and a few small-scale excavations (see Taskinen 2006b for a review, and cf. Lahelma 2007b and [Paper II](#) in this thesis) at rock art sites. Moreover, in addition to the present dissertation, one licentiate thesis (Saavalainen 2001) and two MA theses (Saavalainen 1999a; Lahelma 2000) have been written on Finnish rock art.



FIGURE 14. Kaj Borg chalks the paintings of Astuvansalmi before tracing on a hot summer day in 1968. Photo: Pekka Sarvas/Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

One of the most encouraging developments in recent years involves the Finnish National Board of Antiquities (Finn. *Museovirasto*, Swe. *Museiverket*), which has become more active in recording, conserving and popularising rock art. These efforts have been organised mainly by the archaeologist Helena Taskinen, and their funding has been granted by two Nordic EU projects, called *RockCare* and *Rock Art in Northern Europe* (RANE) that took place between 1999 and 2005 (Taskinen 2007a: 131-6). Perhaps the most important achievement resulting from this activity has been the systematic photographic documentation of nearly all of Finland's over one hundred rock painting sites. The projects also included the study and removal of lichen growing at some rock art sites. However, apart from a few rather general papers on recording and conserving rock art (Taskinen 2000; 2005; 2007) and on the types of lichen growing at rock painting sites (Vänskä 2000; 2002), the results and experiences acquired from these projects are still unpublished.

2.5 How old is the art?

Dating is arguably one of the most important questions associated with rock art. Many researchers have maintained that the marginalization or even dismissal of rock art studies by mainstream archaeology has been due to the problems with acquiring ‘absolute’ dates for rock art. Without a secure way to date the art and to place it into a specific prehistoric context, rock art has often been viewed as “useless” cultural data (Conkey 1997: 169). Much progress has recently been made in developing chronometric techniques of dating rock art (e.g., Dorn 2001; Rowe 2001), but even so, the fact remains that rock art is generally more difficult to date than most other archaeological material.

So far, there have been no attempts to apply chronometric dating methods to Finnish rock art. In principle it might be possible to extract AMS-datable organic matter from the red ochre pigment (see Rowe 2001: 145–7), but many of the techniques required are highly sophisticated and still in an experimental stage. In practice, the most important method available for dating Finnish rock paintings is shore displacement chronology. This can be complemented by some other means, such as dating by association with related finds and representations of datable subject matter. None of these methods gives us an absolute dating for the art, but as Whitley (2006: 61) points out, few dating methods in archaeology in fact can be called “absolute”. Even so-called ‘scientific’ dating methods, such as radiocarbon dating, only produce a range of probabilities. In this respect, most rock art datings are no different from any other dates used in archaeology. All in all, the Finnish rock paintings can be dated more securely than many other corpuses of rock art. The various methods and arguments discussed below provide a reasonably reliable dating for its first appearance, the most active period of painting and gradual decline.

2.5.1 Shoreline dating of rock paintings

Shore displacement studies are the single most important means of dating Finnish rock art. As this method is not necessarily familiar to non-Nordic scholars, a brief explanation is warranted. During the Late Pleistocene, nearly all of Fennoscandia was covered by an ice sheet as much as three kilometres thick, the weight of which pressed down the earth’s crust. When the Ice Age ended and the Fennoscandian landmass became ice-free, it began to slowly rise again – a phenomenon known as isostatic land uplift. The speed of the uplift is highest (ca. 8 mm/a) near the ancient epicenter of the ice-sheet (the modern Gulf of Bothnia) and slows down towards the edges of the ice-sheet. When the rate of land uplift is known, it is possible to calculate the approximate date when an archaeological site originally located on the shore – but today found inland – would have been in use.



FIGURE 15. Pekka Kivikäs at the rock painting of Saraakallio in Central Finland, October 2003. Photo: Antti Lahelma.

Systematic use of the shore displacement method for dating prehistoric settlements and similar archaeological remains began in Finland already in the early 20th century. North European hunter-gatherer rock art is rather well-suited for this kind of dating (e.g., Hesjedal 1994; Helsing 2000; Sognnes 2003), because much of it appears to be closely connected to shorelines (Helsing 1999). Finnish rock paintings are a particularly good case, as most sites are still today located immediately on shorelines, often on steep cliffs that rise directly from the water. It is therefore safe to assume that most of them were originally painted from a boat or the frozen surface of the lake.

The use of the shore displacement method is rather straightforward along the coasts of the Baltic Sea, but only very few painting sites appear to have been located anywhere near the ancient coastline (cf. above). Fortunately, shore displacement also works on the large lake systems of the interior, where most paintings are located. Because the rate of the uplift is not constant but is higher in the north-west than in the south-east, the land in Finland not only rises but also tilts from the north-west to south-east, causing regressions and transgressions in the lakes. As a result, many of the paintings are today located several metres above the current water level. Thus, equipped with a knowledge of the hydrological history of lakes such as Päijänne and Saimaa, it is possible to estimate the approximate period when painting would have been feasible. As a general rule, the higher the painting is located on the cliff, the older it is. In other words, in many cases it is possible to estimate both a *terminus post quem* (prior to which the painted area had still had not emerged from the lake) and a *terminus ante quem* (after which it would have been too high up to reach from the water level). However, paintings that are accessible from a rock ledge or terrace – however narrow – cannot be securely dated using shore displacement chronology.

The first shore displacement dating of a Finnish rock painting was made by the geologist Matti Saarnisto (1969), who dated the painting at Astuvansalmi between 3000-2500 BC (uncalibrated). This study was followed by a series of minor studies by Christian Carpelan (1975), Pirjo Rauhala (1976), Pekka Sarvas and Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1976: 46-8) and Taavitsainen and Kari Kinnunen (1979). The sites studied by Carpelan (1975) ranged, according to him, from 3000 BC to 100 BC (uncalibrated), but he pointed out that with new discoveries, the period of creating rock art was likely to widen even more. Taavitsainen and Kinnunen (1979) indicated a similar date for the beginning of the rock art tradition, but argued that it extended as far as the Migration Period (ca. AD 500). In sum, studies published in the 1970's suggested that the period of rock art began around 3000 BC and lasted until about AD 500.

A new and important development in dating the art occurred in late 1990's when Timo Jussila (1996; 1999) published a more comprehensive study of the shore displacement datings of rock paintings of Lake Saimaa. Jussila's study is superior to earlier studies in a number of ways. First and perhaps foremost, while the earlier studies relied on the shoreline chronology of Lake Saimaa compiled by Saarnisto (1970), Jussila's datings are based on a newer and more detailed distance diagram produced by the *Ancient Lake Saimaa* -project carried out by the University of Helsinki (Dept. of Archaeology) in the 1990's (Jussila 1994). Second, thanks to new discoveries of rock art and more accurate height measurements (published in Kivikäs 1999), Jussila was able to study a much larger body of material (33 painting sites) and thus work out a synthesis from the results. Third, unlike the studies conducted in the 1970's, the shoreline chronology behind his study is based on calibrated radiocarbon-dates.

Without going to too much detail, it can be noted that, according to Jussila (1999: 132), the earliest paintings on Lake Saimaa were made around 4000 calBC. Although this date is a thousand years older than those proposed in the 1970's, the change is not dramatic: the beginning of the rock art tradition still falls within the period of Typical Comb Ware and the difference in dating is explained mostly by the calibration of ¹⁴C-dates. However, Jussila rejects the Iron Age datings proposed by Carpelan and Taavitsainen, arguing that the painting tradition must

have ended by 1000 calBC and probably already did so some 500-1000 years before that. This Early Metal Period end for the painting period coincides neatly with other significant changes in the Saimaa region, such as changes in pottery types and the introduction of stone cairns as a burial form. Jussila concludes that

The result is so obvious that there is no reason to maintain that rock paintings may be earlier than the Early Bronze Age, at least until a painting is found that clearly extends to Bronze Age or Iron Age shore levels. Instead, it can be asserted with good reason that the paintings are related particularly to Stone Age cultures and that the painting activity wanes together with them. (Jussila 1999: 132; my translation).³

It must be noted, though, that Jussila's study only covers the paintings around Lake Saimaa which, although significant, only account for less than one third of all painting sites. Attempts to date paintings on lake systems other than Saimaa have been rather few, but seem to be more or less in agreement with Jussila's results. For example, Timo Miettinen (2000) and Oula Seitsonen (2005b; in press) have presented shore displacement datings for several sites at lakes that are part of (or were once connected to) Lake Päijänne, including the important site of Saraakallio. Their results correspond to Jussila's datings, but it should be added that the shoreline chronology of Päijänne (Matskainen 1979) is less well understood than that of Saimaa. A preliminary experiment (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 77-8) using so far unpublished chronological data on the Päijänne shorelines gave a surprisingly early dating for the painting at Patalahti: it appears to have already been painted around 5000 calBC. If so, Patalahti with its two images of elk-headed boats dates to the Early Comb Ware period and may be regarded as one of the oldest rock paintings in Finland. The uppermost parts of Saraakallio (Seitsonen 2005b: 407), Haukkavuori (at Lake Konnivesi) and Rautakannanvuori may also be of a similar age (Miettinen 2000: 79-80).

The above discussion may give an impression of shoreline dating as a relatively problem-free and exact method. Although Jussila (1999) refers to shoreline datings as "absolute", it is in fact a relative dating method that only gives us a *terminus post quem* (and in some cases, also a probable *terminus ante quem*). Shoreline datings are rough approximates which, moreover, are riddled with uncertainties. It is, for example, unclear how high above the level of water the paintings were usually done: this may have ranged anywhere between ca. 10 to 200 centimetres, although it seems reasonable to assume that most paintings would have been made between 50 and 100 cm above the waterline (Carpelan 1975; Jussila 1999: 122-3). Furthermore, unlike the occupation of a prehistoric site, the painting of a picture has been a very short-term event. A painting done during spring floods may have been painted significantly higher up (and thus appear older) than one done during the summer droughts of the same year. There is, moreover, reason to believe that annual changes in the level of Lake Saimaa were greater during the Stone Age than they are today (Mökkönen 2000), a fact that may further distort shoreline datings. Finally, there are uncertainties related to the shoreline curves themselves, especially regarding the geologically recent phases relevant to archaeology (Jussila 1999: 128-30).

2.5.2 Iconographic parallels

Iconographic parallels can provide some clues to dating rock art. As mentioned, the closest stylistic parallels to Finnish rock art are found at the hunter-gatherer rock art sites of Northern

3 "Tulos on niin selvä, että ei ole mitään perusteltua syytä sanoa kalliomaalauksia vanhempaa pronssikautta nuoremiksi, ennenkuin löytyy maalaus, joka selvästi ulottuu pronssi-rautakautisille rantatasoille. Sen sijaan voidaan vahvoihin perusteisiin sanoa kalliomaalauksen liittyvän nimenomaan kivikautisiin kulttuureihin ja maalausten teon hiipuvan niiden myötä."

Sweden (Kivikäs 2003; Persson 2007), dated to ca. 4000-500 BC. The Lake Onega carvings in Russian Karelia, generally thought to date to the 5th and 4th millennia BC (Poikalainen & Ernits 1999: 37-9), also resemble the Finnish paintings both stylistically and thematically. It seems natural to associate Finnish rock paintings with approximately the same period as has been suggested for these sites. However, as evidenced by the famous case of the Chauvet cave, where paintings stylistically dated to the Magdalenian turned out to be more than 30 000 years old (Clottes 2003), the stylistic dating of rock art has its pitfalls (see also Francis 2001).

One of the most interesting iconographic parallels was drawn by Kivikäs (1995: 42-3, and see Fig. 16), who has noted that the rug-like geometric paintings of Lake Vitträsk in Finland are almost identical to a figure located more than one thousand kilometres to the north at Alta Fjord, Northern Norway (Helskog 1988: 101). Because the Vitträsk painting appears to have been done standing on a rock terrace, it unfortunately cannot be dated by shoreline dating, but the Alta figure (part of the 'Ole Pedersen XI' panel) can. According to Helskog (2000), it belongs to Phase II at Alta, for which he proposes the dating 3300-1800 BC. If these two motifs are contemporary, this offers an interesting, independent chronological clue to dating Finnish rock art.

As indicated above, though, iconographic parallels can also be misleading. Saami drum figures of the historical period include similar net figures as those of Vitträsk and Alta (cf. section 3.4.3), which could mean that the symbol has been in use and practically unchanged for many millennia. The case of the supposed 'sunship' of Astuvansalmi is another example. The original tracing of the Astuvansalmi painting published by Sarvas (1969: 19, group *l*) includes a boat figure in which a ring-cross is depicted amongst the usual crew-strokes. Sarvas (1973: 23) saw here a parallel to the 'sunships' of South Scandinavian rock art, and interpreted its presence at Astuvansalmi as evidence that the boat figures of Finnish rock art were in fact a cultural loan from Scandinavian Bronze Age iconography. Jukka Luoto (1993) continued in a similar vein, but argued that the paintings should in fact be dated to the Neolithic, because similar 'sun-crosses' are already depicted in some Finnish Neolithic finds. But as Kivikäs (1999: 46) writes, and as many visitors to Astuvansalmi have observed, it is quite probable that there is no ring-cross depicted in the boat figure at all. There is simply a mistake in the tracing, perhaps influenced by an awareness of Scandinavian rock art literature. The parallels with Finnish Neolithic finds and South Scandinavian rock art are thus invalid.

Sometimes the iconography of rock art includes weapons, chariots or other elements of material culture that may offer clues to dating (e.g., Malmer 1989). This is not the case in Finland, however, where the only weapon depicted in rock art is the bow held by a female figure at Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969, group *f*). Apart from this, the only representations of material culture in the paintings consist of boat figures, but even these are mostly too schematic to be of much use in dating. However, some boat figures feature an elk head on the prow, which invites a parallel with a bog find from Lehtojärvi, Northern Finland (Erä-Esko 1958). The item is a wooden elk head ca. 40 cm long that was evidently attached to something – probably the



FIGURE 16. Iconographic parallels: a) one of the 'net figures' at Vitträsk, Southern Finland (Europaeus 1917); b) a similar figure at Alta (Ole Pedersen XI), Northern Norway (Helskog 1988: 101).



FIGURE 17. A Typical Comb Ware potsherd from Kolomcy, North-Western Russia, showing a row of schematic water-birds and a horned anthropomorph (on the left). According to Äyräpää 1953a.

proW of a boat – as the ‘neck’ of the elk is hollow. The find has been radiocarbon-dated to the Late Mesolithic, 7740 ± 170 BP (Hel-168) or ca. 6625 calBC, and is thus more than 1500 years older than the earliest shoreline datings suggested for rock paintings.⁴

Pottery decoration also provides some clues to dating since Typical Comb Ware pots (dated ca. 4200–3800 BC) are sometimes decorated with representational images that resemble those of rock art. The most interesting among these are schematic water-birds (Äyräpää 1953a; Pesonen 1996b), which provide a close parallel to the water-birds of the rock painting at Rapakko (Koponen *et al.* 1993: 83) as well as to the Lake Onega carvings (Poikalainen & Ernits 1998). Aside from water-birds, a few human stick-figures have been identified in Typical Comb Ware pottery decoration (Taavitsainen 1982; Huurre 1986). Perhaps the most interesting example was found at Kolomcy near Novgorod (North-Western Russia), where a Typical Comb Ware rim-sherd (Fig. 17) shows a row of water-birds interrupted by a horned anthropomorph (Äyräpää 1953a: 37). The figure, which has a ring-shaped head, is strongly reminiscent of similar figures at, for example, Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969, group *f*) and Ruominkapia (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976: 34).

2.5.3 Associated finds

As Whitley (2006: 60) writes, a rock art panel represents but a single component of a larger and more complex archaeological phenomenon. Finds made at rock art sites, especially when found in stratified contexts, can thus provide clues concerning its age. In Finland, so far only seven radiocarbon-dates have been obtained from such material, most of them in association with the present PhD project (Fig 21).

Textile Ware pot-sherds found in front of the Valkeisaari painting were recently radiocarbon-dated to 3100 ± 50 BP (Hela-1127), or 1370 calBC (see [Paper III](#)). The dating was made from the soot attached to the inner surface of the rim sherds. A second ¹⁴C-dating (Hela-1177) made from two bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) seeds found deep in the cultural layer at the same site gave a result of 740 ± 40 BP (or ca. 1258 calAD). Unfortunately, the significance of this dating is unclear because of the possibility (however slim) of modern contamination

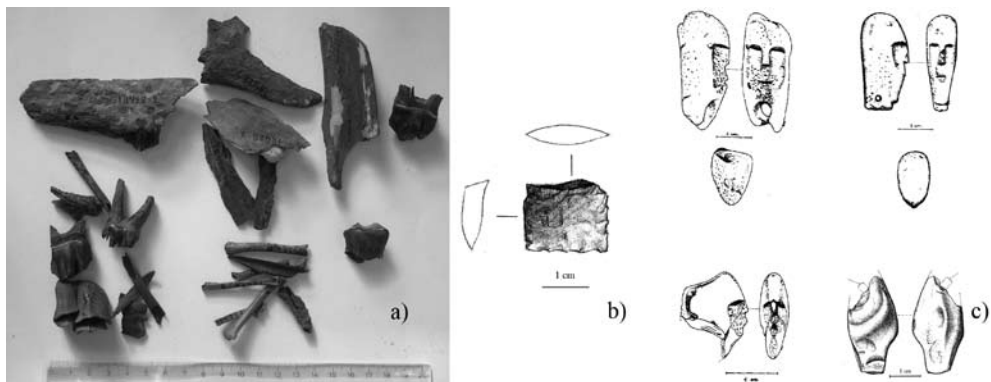


FIGURE 18. Finds associated with Finnish rock painting sites: a) unburnt bones of elk and water-birds from Kotojärvi; b) a fragment of an even-based projectile point from Saraakallio; c) four amber pendants found at Astuvansalmi. Photo by Antti Lahelma, drawings by TA/Finnish National Board of Antiquities (b) and Charles Marin (c).

4 All ¹⁴C-dates in this essay were calibrated using the OxCal v. 3.10 computer program (one sigma or 68.2% probability), with atmospheric data from Reimer *et al.* (2004).



FIGURE 19. A final photo of the small test trench dug at the foot of the Astuvansalmi painting in 1968, and the two arrow points found in the trench (small photo). Today the trench lies under a wooden platform built for visitors. Photo: Pekka Sarvas/Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

(see [Paper II](#)). A third dating (Hela-1128) from Valkeisaari, made from a sheep bone, turned out to be recent (90 ± 30 BP), probably from the 18th or 19th century AD.

Two datings have also been obtained from unburnt bone material found in front of the Kotojärvi painting. These bones (Fig. 18a), recovered from a test-pit made in shallow water (ca. 1 m deep) immediately in front of the painting, belonged to elk and various bird species (Ojonen 1973). Only after writing [Papers II and III](#), where these finds are briefly discussed, did I have the opportunity to actually date one of the finds. A bone of a woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*, NM 18428:11) found at Kotojärvi produced a result of 3275 ± 35 BP (Hela-1434), or ca. 1555 calBC. A second ¹⁴C-dating was already obtained three decades ago from an elk bone found in the same test-pit, but is only now being published (Taavitsainen in press).⁵ Its result, 3300 ± 100 BP (Su-775), conforms perfectly with the dating of the bird bone. The nature of the bone finds has sometimes been questioned - the animals might in theory have drowned out of natural causes in front of the cliff. However, in the light of these two datings - which show that the different bones are contemporary and date to a period when rock paintings were still

⁵ I thank Prof. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen for sending me the manuscript of his paper and allowing me to publish the result.

made - the deposit can be safely assigned to the beginning of the Early Metal Period and its ritual nature and relation to the painting is now clear.

Jukka Luoto's excavations in front of the painting Kalamaniemi II produced a small number of finds, including a few flint and quartz flakes, and a wood charcoal sample (NM 31547: 5) was collected for future dating. The charcoal was found in a concentration ca. 30 cm below ground level but, according to the excavator (Luoto 1999), its association with the painting was uncertain as no actual cultural layer was observed.



FIGURE 20. A cobblestone with a painted net-figure from the Late Comb Ware site of Nästinristi near Turku in south-western Finland. Photo: Markku Haverinen/Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

It should be pointed out, though, that because the soil at the site is coarse, perhaps no clear staining of the soil can be expected. With Luoto's permission, I had the sample dated (Hela-1436) and received the result of 400 ± 30 BP, or ca. 1530 calAD. The result is interesting and shows that some sort of activity was still taking place at the site in the Late Middle Ages or Early Modern Period. However, although the terrace in front of the painting is narrow, it is conceivable that the charcoal could derive, for example, from a hunter's temporary fireplace and thus have nothing to do with the painting.

Unfortunately, one initially interesting find associated with the painting at Astuvansalmi turned out to be recent. A worked piece of reindeer antler (NM 26331:5) found in Juhani Grönhagen's excavations from the same underwater depression as the famous amber objects (Grönhagen 1994, and see Fig. 18c) gave the result -1270 ± 25 BP (>MODERN). According to Markku Oinonen (email message 13.7.2007), head of the radiocarbon laboratory of the University of Helsinki, the so-called absolute percent Modern (pM) value of the radiocarbon was so high (116,3) that the antler probably postdates the era of atmospheric nuclear testing (1945-1963). Nothing in the sample preparation procedure suggested the possibility of contamination and all the other results in the batch of forty samples produced the expected results. Its deposition at the rock art site, a rather well-known tourist attraction, may therefore be a simple prank.

Some of the finds associated with rock paintings can be dated on typological grounds. These include two projectile points found in 1968 at Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969: 24, see Fig. 19). One of them is a Late Neolithic slate point (Pyheensilta or Volosovo type), according to present knowledge dated to ca. 2400-2000 BC. The other is a fragment of a straight-based quartz point, a type dated mainly to the first part of the Early Metal Period (1800 BC - 500 BC) but which is sometimes also found in Late Neolithic contexts. A fragment of what is probably also a straight-based point (Fig. 18b) made of porphyrite has been found in front of the painting of Saraakallio (NM 21744).⁶ The four amber pendants (Fig. 18c) found in the underwater excavations at Astuvansalmi (Grönhagen 1994) also offer a chronological clue. Their typological dating is uncertain, as relatively few anthropomorphic amber pendants have been found in the entire Baltic Sea region (Iršėnas 2001). However, nearly all finds of amber in Finnish archaeology have been found in Typical or Late Comb Ware contexts, strongly suggesting a Subneolithic dating for the Astuvansalmi finds also. The closest datable parallel

⁶ NM refers to the catalogue numbers of the Finnish National Museum.

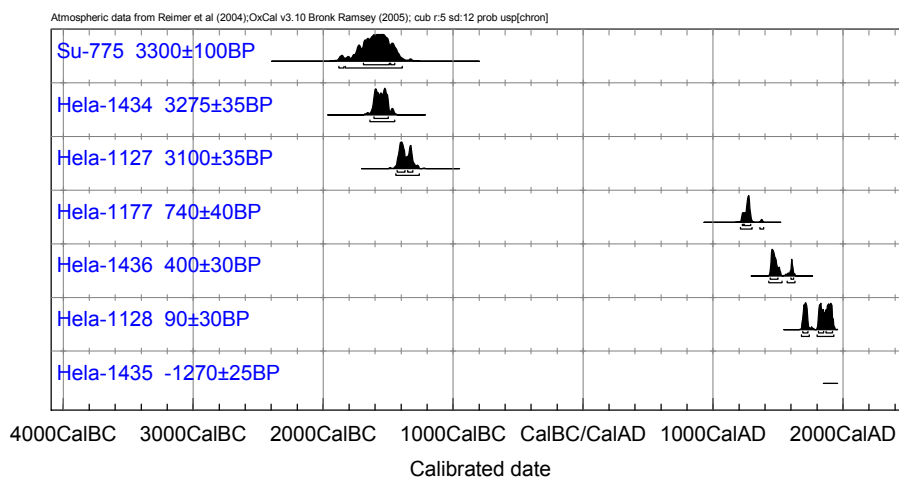


FIGURE 21. Radiocarbon datings made of material found at rock painting sites. See the text for descriptions of the dated material and its context. Calibrated using OxCal v. 3.10.

comes from a richly equipped red ochre grave in the Stone Age cemetery of Kukarkoski in South-Western Finland (Torvinen 1978). Among the numerous grave goods were dozens of different amber objects, including one that resembles a human head (fig. 11 in Torvinen 1978; NM 19727:481). Carbonized wood found in the bottom layers of the grave was radiocarbon-dated to 4890 ± 150 BP (Hel-832) or 3725 calBC. The dating, which falls in the latter part of the Typical Comb Ware period, is confirmed by the discovery of a small Typical Comb Ware pot in the same grave.

A few stone objects that seem relevant to the study of the rock paintings may also be mentioned. A carved stone sinker found in the Aapiskoski rapids near Rovaniemi, Northern Finland, has a ring-headed human stick-figure that resembles those of rock art (Äyräpää 1953b). However, the stone is a stray find it is therefore of not much use in dating. Various bored stone discs or maces, sometimes decorated with geometric markings such as oblique crosses and zigzag-lines (e.g., Kivikäs 2000: 20-21, and NM 25770, 2084:274) that resemble those of rock art, may also be mentioned. Alas, these finds are fiendishly difficult to date, as they were in use throughout the Finnish Stone Age and often appear to have been accidentally or intentionally deposited in bodies of water.

More interesting than the engraved objects is the painted stone (Fig. 20) from Nästinristi, found in the excavations of a large Late Comb Ware site in South-Western Finland. The stone (NM 20606:82, size 16.0 x 12.0 x 10.5 cm) is an unmodified, water-worn cobble that has a red ochre painting of a net figure on one side. It was deposited in fine sand 'face down' and was not found in a cultural layer, but there is no reason to doubt that the stone is somehow associated with the Subneolithic site, as red ochre graves were found only ca. 10 m from the find spot. The ^{14}C -datings obtained from pit hearths and graves at Nästinristi ranged from 4910 ± 130 BP (Hel-1349) to 4460 ± 130 BP (Hel-1348). It seems very probable that the stone is of a similar date, that is, between ca. 4000 and 3000 calBC.

2.5.4 Conclusion

To summarise the current understanding of the dates for rock art, it seems that the first rock paintings in Finland were made during the Early Subneolithic or around 5000 BC. The most active period of painting (at least on Lake Saimaa) appears to have fallen around 3600 to 2500

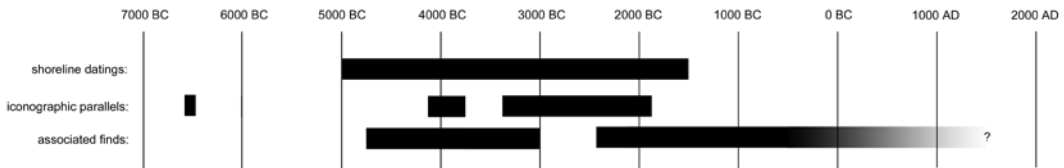


FIGURE 22. A summary of the various chronological indicators discussed in the text: shoreline datings (based on Jussila 1999 and Seitsonen 2005b), iconographic parallels (with the Lehtojärvi elk head sculpture, Typical Comb Ware pottery decoration, and the Ole Pedersen XI panel at Alta, Norway) and datable archaeological finds associated with rock paintings (see the text for details).

BC or within the first part of the Late Comb Ware period. Following that, the painting tradition begins to decline and seems to end around 1500 BC or the beginning of the Early Metal Period. Surprisingly many of the datable finds made at rock painting sites date to this period of decline. This could reflect a change in the ritual use of the sites - a shift from painting to offering, for example - and be related to the wider changes that took place around the beginning of the Early Metal period (see section 2.7 below).

It is, however, important to point out that, in actual fact, the dating indicated by the above discussion is open-ended. Although most sites appear to date to the Stone Age, many rock paintings cannot be dated using shore displacement chronology or any other method so far attempted. Although there is not much concrete evidence for it, the possibility that some of them were painted during the Mesolithic or the Iron Age (or even the historical period) thus cannot be ruled out.

Even if we assume that paintings ceased to be done around 1500 BC, the ritual use of rock art may well have continued beyond the Early Metal Period, as some clues in the ethnography would seem to suggest (*Papers IV & V*). At present, the only concrete evidence for late activity at the painting sites comes from the two radiocarbon dates discussed above, obtained from material found at the paintings of Valkeisaari and Kalamaniemi II. In both cases, there are uncertainties associated with the dated samples, and as such, they can be treated only as interesting anomalies. Even so, and in the light of similarly young datings from Norwegian and Swedish rock painting sites (Hebba Helberg 2004; Lindgren 2004; Hansson 2006), these anomalies invite further research and provide preliminary evidence that some form of activity associated with rock art sites may have continued until surprisingly recent times.

2.6 Dating changes in motif types

Based on Jussila's shore displacement data and Kivikäs' measurements, Oula Seitsonen (2005a & b) has made an interesting study on diachronic stylistic change in the art. Seitsonen is not content with only dating the painting sites, but uses the shoreline method to date individual painting motifs, with the aim of establishing their relative ages and any possible changes in the rock art tradition. His studies show that, at least on Lakes Saimaa and Päijänne, there are indeed such changes. It may not be surprising to find changes in a tradition that lasted for over three millennia. However, it is important to note that whereas earlier thoughts on the subject of stylistic change (e.g., Miettinen 1986) were based on pure speculation, Seitsonen's research has an empirical basis.

Seitsonen divides the Lake Saimaa paintings into five horizons that follow each other at 500 year intervals, with horizon I beginning around 4500 and horizon V ending around 2000 calBC (Seitsonen 2005a: 8). His horizons are thus not to be understood as archaeological phases

but as technical aids for classifying the paintings. There do not seem to be dramatic breaks in the tradition: the changes observed by Seitsonen are gradual shifts in emphasis. To summarise his results, the first and earliest horizon is characterised by the high proportion of boat images, which steadily become rarer over time and barely occur at all in the most recent paintings. By contrast, the proportion of elk and human figures grows over time. The largest and most varied paintings appear to have been made between ca. 3600-2500 BC, which emerges as something of a golden age of rock art. The range and quantity of figures begin to decrease around 2500 and become more schematic. This development is most obvious in the images of elk, which change from outline figures (sometimes showing the heart) into fully painted or stick-figure animals. There is also a change in orientation: where most of the early elk figures face left, the majority the later s face right. In the final horizon, human figures become more common than elk.

This study represents a major step forward in what has been a rather chaotic view of Finnish rock paintings as a homogenous mass of images. The developments distinguished by Seitsonen at Saimaa appear to be repeated at Lake Päijänne (Seitsonen 2005b; in press) and may also find parallels in the neighbouring regions. For example, a similar study by Sognnes (1998) in Central Norway indicates that representations of animals in rock carvings appear to progress from ‘x-ray animals’ towards stick-figure animals. However, as Seitsonen (2005: 7-8) points out, the problems associated with shoreline dating are acute in this kind of a study. As the amount of datable painting motifs is rather small, the effects of taphonomy, short-term changes in water-level or possible idiosyncrasies in style may dramatically affect the results.

2.7 Prehistoric cultural context

Because the argument of this dissertation revolves around the possibility of a direct historical link between ancient rock art and recent ethnography, and because up-to-date literature on Finnish archaeology in languages other than Swedish or Finnish is difficult to come by, I feel that a brief account of the prehistory of the Finnish Lake Region is warranted. Happily, due to investigations conducted by the University of Helsinki in the 1990’s, the prehistory particularly of the region surrounding Lake Saimaa is comparatively well-known. The detailed studies in the palaeoenvironment (Kirkinen 1996; Jussila 1994), palaeo-ecology (Ukkonen 1996) and archaeology (e.g., Pesonen 1996a; Mökkönen 2000) of the region, carried out in the recent past, make it one of the archaeologically best-studied parts of Finland

The first post-glacial pioneer settlement of Finland appears to have taken place around 8600 calBC, possibly from two or more directions. The first inhabitants of the southern and

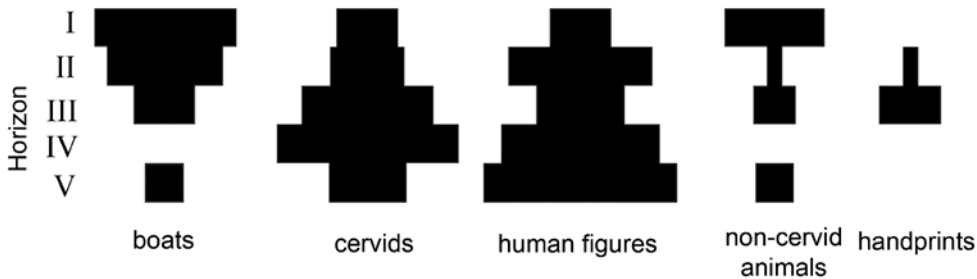


FIGURE 23. A seriation diagram of the most common rock painting motifs at Lake Saimaa, divided into five ‘horizons’ (each of them 500 years long) spanning the time between ca. 4500 BC to 2000 BC. Based on Seitsonen (2005a, fig. 7).

central parts of the country (including the Lake Region) appear to have migrated from the territory of present-day Estonia and were related to the Early Mesolithic Kunda culture – a northern branch of the Epipaleolithic Swidry culture (Carpelan 1999; Takala 2004). In the north, however, the initial settlement may be related to the Komsa culture of Arctic Norway (Rankama & Kankaanpää 2004). This pioneer stage was quite soon replaced by what is commonly known as the Suomusjärvi culture, a phase of Mesolithic hunting-culture that lasted for several millennia (until ca. 5100 calBC). The Suomusjärvi culture can be seen as a period of established settlement following the pioneer stage, when, for example, the lithic technologies developed for processing flint were replaced by ones more suitable for using the domestic quartz supplies (flint being a material that is not naturally found in Finland). Although concentrated on the ancient seashores, the network of Suomusjärvi sites covered thinly the entire country, extending all the way to Finnish Lapland (Huurre 1998: 48). The Suomusjärvi culture gives the impression of being a ‘static’ and culturally conservative stage, although this may in part result from the one-sided nature of the find material. However, there appears to be a gradual shift from big-game hunting towards smaller prey, as evidenced by the fact that the characteristic slate spearheads ceased to be made around 6000 BC – at the same time as oblique quartz projectile points appear in the find material (Matskainen 1986; 1989). Rock art contemporary with the Suomusjärvi culture has been found in Arctic Norway (Hesjedal 1994) and the Ural mountains in Russia (Steelman *et al.* 2002), but so far not in Finland.

Pottery was first introduced into the Finnish find material by ca. 5100 calBC, initiating the Subneolithic Comb Ware period which lasted until 1800 calBC (Carpelan 1999). From our point of view, this period is particularly interesting because, as we saw above, according to present knowledge, the first rock paintings were made in Finland during the Early Comb Ware period and their production seems to have ceased with the end of the Subneolithic. Comb Ware pottery, so-called because of the characteristic decoration that has been made using a comb-like instrument, is divided into three main stages: Early, Typical and Late Comb Ware (Åyräpää 1930). The pottery-making innovation spread to Finland from the east, but there is little to indicate that the introduction of pottery was associated with any significant migration of people from that direction. Many dwelling sites already occupied in the aceramic period continued to be used, as did many different types of stone tools. The question of precisely why pottery was adopted by hunter-gatherers otherwise living at the ‘Mesolithic’ level is somewhat shrouded in mystery, but may be related to the emergence of more sedentary, complex hunter-gatherer societies (Núñez 1990).

It should, however, be noted that pottery was not the only innovation reaching Finland at this point. Early Comb Ware sites sometimes also feature clay idols (Núñez 1986), another feature usually associated with Neolithic cultures that probably spread to Finland from the east. Given these eastern contacts, it is possible that the practice of creating rock paintings also spread to Finland from the east. Although rock paintings have not been found in most of European Russia, the cave paintings of the Urals, which have recently been radiocarbon-dated to the Late Mesolithic (ca. 6000 calBC; Steelman *et al.* 2002), provide evidence of an early rock painting tradition in that area. Although geographically far from Finland, discoveries in Finland of Subneolithic sled runners and other wooden objects made of Siberian Pine (*Pinus cembra s. sibirica*), a tree that only grows east of the Urals, provides striking evidence of long-distance contacts and travel even in this early phase of prehistory (Edgren 1993: 67).

The latter part of the Subneolithic in the Lake Region is characterized by the emergence of various asbestos-tempered pottery types which evidently continue the Comb Ware tradition. The Subneolithic phase is brought to an end by the emergence of a new ceramic group, Textile Ware, possibly associated with a migration from the east (Lavento 2001). According to Mika Lavento (2001: 186),

Textile ceramics characterises the period, which radically changed the society in mainland Finland. It perhaps met the remnants of the populations of Asbestos ceramics, broke the old tradition during a short period of time or came to the territory where Asbestos ceramics had already disappeared. [...] It brought the first bronze implements and bronze casting to eastern and northern Finland. Agriculture came to the coastal area from other directions, but in eastern Finland the spread of it may have taken place together with the makers of Textile ceramics.

As indicated by the above quotation, the appearance of Textile Ware (which receives its name from apparent textile impressions on pot surfaces) around 1800 BC initiates the Bronze Age in the Finnish interior. In the archaeology of the Lake Region, this period is also known as the Early Metal Period and, because of the scarcity of metal objects, is extended to cover the Early Iron Age (until ca. AD 200). Although the Early Metal Period did not constitute a complete break with Subneolithic lifeways, there were certain significant changes. From the point of view of rock art, this stage is an important watershed because it seems that the last rock paintings in Finland were made during the Early Metal Period. As Jussila (1999: 132) writes, the waning of the rock art tradition coincides with the first indications of slash-and-burn agriculture and the appearance of the so-called ‘Lapp cairns’ (Finn. *lapinraunio*) – burials in stone cairns, which indicate that significant ideological and social changes accompanied the introduction of primitive agriculture and metals (Taavitsainen 20003).

Equally significant, however, is the fact that these early experiments in slash-and-burn cultivation did not lead to any radical change in the economy in the Lake Region. Instead, hunting and fishing remained the main source of food for the inhabitants of the Finnish interior for more than two thousand years, that is to say until the Middle Iron Age (Lavento 2001: 186). Significantly for the purposes of this study, a ‘dual economy’ of agriculture and hunting remained characteristic of the inhabitants of Finland throughout the Middle Ages and in some parts of the country, including the Lake Region, even later (Zvelebil & Rowley-Conwy 1984).

This pattern of economic continuity from the hunter-gatherer Stone Age combined with limited (but nonetheless important) experiments with food production is one of the keys to understanding the relationship between rock art and ethnography in Finland. It helps us to comprehend why rock art apparently ceased to be produced in the Lake Region more than three thousand years ago, and why at the same time it is possible that beliefs related to rock art survived in local lore up until the 19th century.

3 INTERPRETATION

3.1 Previous interpretations

Although interpretation has never been a major focus in Finnish rock art research, this aspect of its history of research has been exceptionally well chronicled (Saavalainen 1999a; 2001) and therefore need not be discussed in great detail here. In the conclusion to his Licentiate thesis on the subject, the historian of religion, Janne Saavalainen (2001: 68), finds that in spite of decades of work, this research has so far not led to any breathtaking results:

If we look back to the interpretations suggested by Europaeus of the first panel found, we may observe that research has not progressed much at all. Europaeus already dated the Finnish rock painting tradition to the Comb Ware period and was as confident in associating it with hunting cultures and their subsistence strategies as modern scholars have been [...] ⁷ (Saavalainen 2001: 68; my translation)

Saavalainen (2001: 67-8) lists altogether ten different interpretative frameworks that have been used to explain the paintings, including ‘art for art’s sake’, ‘fertility cult’ and ‘totemism’. However, there can be no question that generalised ‘hunting magic’ has been the dominant paradigm in Finnish archaeological literature (e.g., Sarvas 1969; 1973; Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976; Taavitsainen 1978; Luho 1971: 41; Siiriäinen 1981; Edgren 1984: 64; Huurre 1990: 66-7; 1998: 261-2; 2004: 222; Purhonen 1998: 33). As Saavalainen points out, Europaeus (Fig. 24) concluded that the paintings of Vitträsk were unlikely to be idle scribbling, but more probably represented the “primitive religious beliefs” of their Stone Age painters (Europaeus 1917; 1922). More to the point, Europaeus (1917: 49) associated the paintings with a hunting culture and its hopes of maintaining hunting luck.

The idea that the ‘primitive hunters’ of the Stone Age believed in ‘sympathetic magic’, where the production of art had a magico-functional purpose – increasing hunting luck – ultimately derives from the writings of the Victorian anthropologist Sir James Frazer (1890). In Europaeus’ time, Frazer’s ideas were in the process of becoming the established truth among rock art researchers such as Solomon Reinach (1903) in France, Gutorm Gjessing (1936) in Norway and Gustaf Hallström (1938) in Sweden. The theory of hunting magic also found favour with the most influential figure in the early 20th century study of cave art, the French cleric Henri Breuil (1952). These scholars regarded rock art as a rather straightforward matter, the purpose of which was to ensure that game was plentiful.

Following Europaeus, the theory of hunting magic was adopted by Pekka Sarvas (1969), who found the important site of Astuvansalmi while on a boating holiday on Lake Saimaa in the late 1960’s. Gjessing’s publications appear to have been the main source of inspiration for Sarvas, who was convinced that the paintings were done to either secure hunting luck (if they were painted before the hunt) or to express thanks for the catch (if they were painted after the hunt) (Sarvas 1973: 28; 1975: 46). Together with Taavitsainen (1978; Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976), he associated the paintings with springtime elk hunting, which would have been easier on lakeshores than in the snowy forest. The fact that paintings are mostly located in narrows

⁷ “Jos katsomme taaksepäin aina Europaeuksen ensimmäisestä kuvakentästä tekemiä tulkintoja, voimme todeta, ettei tutkimus ole juurikaan edennyt. Jo Europaeus ajoitti suomalaisen maalausperinteen kampakeraamiseksi ja liitti sen yhtä varmasti pyyntikulttuuriin ja toimeentulostrategioihin kuin tämän päivän tutkijatkin [...]”

he explained as being related to the migratory routes of the elk, which would have provided plenty of good opportunities for the elk hunters, thus perhaps also giving such places a religious dimension.

Rather exceptionally for his time, Sarvas was not content with studying the paintings alone, but arranged a small-scale excavation in front of the painting. The finds – two prehistoric stone arrow points, one of them broken – were of course a perfect match with the hunting magic theory, and have secured its popularity among Finnish archaeologists up until the present day. For example, a 1998 book on ‘Stone Age Finland’ explains that

[Painting a picture] lured the prey to the site or imprisoned its soul in the rock, so that it would have to remain in its surroundings. The absence of predators in the paintings may, on the other hand, be due to the fact that one did not want them to compete for the prey, and for this reason, depicting them was avoided. Sometimes the pictures appear to have been shot at: every once in a while, the heart has been marked in the paintings like a bull’s eye. Perhaps it was hoped that such ritual shooting would ensure that the arrows would hit the real creatures as accurately as they hit the pictures. The two fragments of stone arrow points found in front of the Astuvansalmi painting may be remains of such a rite.⁸ (Huurre 1998: 261; my translation).

In a significant break from this tradition of interpretation, the anthropologist Anna-Leena Siikala – an expert in the study of Siberian religions – wrote a paper on the shamanistic interpretation of the art in 1980 (Siikala 1980; first published in English in 1981). Although the paper is not widely cited in North European rock art literature, a number of Finnish researchers (e.g., Miettinen 2000: 41; Saavalainen 1999a: 10) have regarded it as the most important study on Finnish rock art written so far. Some of Siikala’s ideas are evidently derived from the work of Andreas Lommel (1967), which she cites in her paper, but even so, and given the fact that it predates the boom in shamanistic interpretations inspired by the ‘neuropsychological model’ of David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson (1988), it has some claim to being a pioneering paper in hunter-gatherer rock art research.

According to Siikala, the images of elk in Finnish rock paintings may be related to so-called ‘animal ceremonialism’, whereupon the continuity of the hunted species is guaranteed by a ritual in which the animal is sent back to its ‘owner’. A well-known example of animal ceremonialism involves the rituals surrounding bear hunting, which among the Saami, Finns and other circumpolar peoples is ritually moved to the spirit world (Hallowell 1926; Manker 1971b). Siikala believed that the large number of elk in Finnish rock paintings associates them with hunting, but not in the traditional sense of hunting magic. Instead, the paintings were done in order to return the hunted elk to their ‘owner spirit’, which she identified with the ‘Lady with the Bow’ at Astuvansalmi. According to Siikala, this image is likely to represent a being of the spirit world, since among modern circumpolar cultures, special taboos exist concerning women and game: “the very presence of a woman in hunter’s quarters might defile the hunting tackle, making [it] unfit for use” (Siikala 1981: 94). In Siikala’s view, then, rock paintings were to be understood as places where the shaman could contact the ‘keeper’ of the elk species.

Unlike Sarvas, Siikala attempted to interpret all the images of rock art – not just some categories such as elk. Siikala saw all the paintings in a shamanistic light. For example, an-

8 “[Kuvan tekeminen] ehkä houkutteli saalista paikalle taikka vangitsi kallioon eläinten sielun, niin että niiden oli pysyttävä lähisiedulla. Petojen puuttuminen maalauksista taas saattaa johtua siitä, ettei niitä haluttu kilpailemaan riistasta ja siksi niiden kuvaamista on vältetty. Joskus kuvia lienee myös ammuttu; silloin tällöin hirvenkuviin on merkitty sydämen kohta kuin napakympiksi. Ehkä tällaisen rituaaliammunnan on toivottu takaavan nuolten osumisen todelliseen otukseen yhtä tarkasti kuin kuvaan. Astuvansalmen maalauksen edustalta löytyneet pari kivisen nuolen katkelmaa saattavat olla muista tällaisesta toimituksesta.”

thropomorphic images represent, in her view, human-shaped spirit helpers, as do the images of birds and fish. Boat figures, on the other hand, were related to the passage to the Otherworld in a boat or canoe. Siikala also found a parallel to the handprints of rock art in the metal decorations of the shaman's costume, which sometimes include metal plates cut in the shape of a human hand (Siikala 1981: 92).

In a series of papers, the amateur archaeologist Eero Autio (1993 a & b; 1995; 1998) has criticised Siikala's interpretation for relying too heavily on Siberian ethnography, making the important point that analogies should be ideally based on local ethnography. His main argument concerns the horned anthropomorphs, usually interpreted as shamans (e.g., Siikala 1981: 94). Autio points out that although Siberian shamans did wear a specific shaman's dress, which sometimes included horned headgear, there is not very much evidence that the Saami *noaidi* used such paraphernalia. Therefore, he concludes, the horned anthropomorphs of rock art are more likely to represent mythological beings than shamans. Instead, he associates the rock paintings with totemism, a system of belief in which a mystical kinship relationship exists between a group of people and a 'totem' animal. Autio believes that the horned anthropomorphs depict totemic ancestor beings and finds a parallel in Saami myths that speak of *Meandaš*, a creature who was half human and half deer. The Saami of the Kola Peninsula are said to have believed that they were descended from *Meandaš* (Autio 1993b: 117).

Some professional archaeologists have also attempted to make use of Saami ethnography in their interpretations. In the early 1970's, Ville Luho compared certain motifs of rock art with those on Saami drums and noted also the similarity between the Saami sacred sites (*sieidi*) and rock painting sites (Luho 1970; 1971). His ideas were cautiously endorsed by Taavitsainen (1978; 1981), but dismissed by Sarvas (1973) and in the end did not inspire much discussion. However, a little later on, Milton Núñez has continued the line of argument begun by Luho, pointing out further similarities between Saami religion and the rock paintings (1981; 1994; 1995). He is also one of the few scholars to have argued that there may be a 'direct historical' relationship between rock art and the modern Saami. His articles are regrettably short and lacking in ethnographic detail, but contain, in embryonic form, many of the ideas that have been expanded and argued further in this dissertation.

Finally, the work of archaeologist Timo Miettinen must be mentioned. A prolific writer on rock art since the mid-1970's, Miettinen has advocated the use of an "ethnosemiotic method" in interpreting rock art (e.g. Miettinen 1990a: 39; 2000: 43). It is, however, somewhat unclear what this method entails or how it is realised in his own work. Miettinen's ideas on interpretation are summarised in the introduction to his book on the rock paintings of the Kymi river



FIGURE 24. The archaeologist Aarne Europaeus (who later 'Finnicized' his surname to Äyräpää) at the rock painting of Vitträsk in 1922. Photo: Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

valley (Miettinen 2000). According to him, rock art is “functionally a highly multidimensional phenomenon and, given the present state of research, it is too early to define the relationships between its various elements, such as shamanism, hunting magic, totemism, fertility cult, cosmology and the aesthetic element”⁹ (Miettinen 2000: 42; my translation). In sum, Miettinen (2000: 43) feels that the meanings of the art are “kaleidoscopically ambiguous”.

The ambiguity of rock art meanings is, of course, an idea famously championed by Christopher Tilley (1991), but Miettinen’s publications lack the theoretical arsenal employed by Tilley and are thus more difficult to approach. Instead, as exemplified by the above quotation, they often exhibit a somewhat uncritical and disorganised use of concepts like hunting magic, shamanism and totemism, never properly defined. Together with the fact that his publications include relatively few references to scientific literature, this casts a shadow over the many good ideas and interesting observations in his work. Miettinen’s other books on the subject (Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003; Miettinen & Willamo 2007) are riddled with similar problems. Indeed, as the folklorist Kaarina Koski (2003) comments, these and other recent works on Finnish rock art have suffered from a somewhat confused approach to interpretation and a certain lack of scientific rigour.

3.2 Initial hypothesis

In reviewing the ethnography of rock art, Robert Layton (2000) has shown that where relevant ethnography exists, most rock art worldwide can be related to either shamanism or totemism, with some examples of ‘secular’ rock art also known. In my interpretations of Finnish rock art discussed in the papers of this dissertation, I have used shamanism as an initial hypothesis. I think of rock art interpretation as in some ways analogous to archaeological excavation. Just as the archaeologist conducting an excavation should have some preliminary hypothesis about what it is that he or she is investigating, against which the observations can then be weighed and the hypothesis either confirmed or discarded, so should the student of rock art. My choice of shamanism as an initial hypothesis is thus not related to any particular aim to “find shamanism” in the art, but is based on four observations that I find fundamental to the interpretation of Finnish rock art:

1) The ‘iconic’ nature of the art, to use a term coined by Michael Klassen (1998), suggests that the paintings “do not represent a specific time, place or event, but rather evoke the eternal present of the spirit world”, that they deal with “sacred subject matter and themes [and that] the thematic and formal repetition of iconic motifs reflects the ritualised nature of sacred activities” (Klassen 1998: 44-5).

2) The numerical distribution of motifs (cf. section 2.3 above) – where one animal species is dominant – corresponds perfectly to Layton’s (2000, tables 2 & 3) data on shamanistic rock art. Totemic rock art, by contrast, should show a wider range of motifs (with each motif concentrated at a few geographic locations) and secular or commemorative art would be expected to have less clear patterns in motif frequency.

3) Finnish and Saami pre-Christian religion (as well as that of other Finno-Ugric peoples) have a clear shamanistic character.

9 “On ilmeistä, että kalliotaide on syytä nähdä funktioltaan hyvin moniulotteisena ilmiönä, jonka kohdalla erilaisten sisällöllisten elementtien, samanismien, metsästysmagian, totemismin, hedelmällisyyskultin, kosmologian ja esteettisen elementin välinen suhde on tutkimuksen nykyvaiheessa vielä liian aikaista määrittellä”

4) Multidisciplinary evidence supports the idea of very long-term continuity of habitation and cultural forms in the territory of modern Finland (e.g., Fogelberg 1999; Pesonen & Westermarck 2003).

To this may be added two arguments that Lewis-Williams (2002: 205-6) presents in support for his hypothesis that Palaeolithic cave art is similarly shamanistic in origin:

5) There is every reason to believe that Stone Age hunter-gatherers were cognitively fully modern and thus had the potential of experiencing similar trance-states and hallucinations as modern humans.

6) Some form of shamanism is ubiquitous among historically recorded hunter-gatherer groups throughout the world – a fact that possibly derives from the “universal, human neurological inheritance that includes the capacity of the nervous system to enter altered states and the need to make sense of the resultant dreams and hallucinations within a foraging way of life” (Lewis-Williams 2002: 206).

The choice of shamanism as a working hypothesis thus follows the rather elementary logic of working from the known to the unknown. Because of the evidence for long-term continuity, this logic is useful even when the estimated time gap between the rock art and the ethnographic record is wide. David Whitley (2006: 103) has stated that when confronted with a rock art region and its ethnographic record,

The starting point, since most rock art is religious in origin, is straightforward: we need to develop an understanding of the religious system, which most likely provided the cultural context within which art was made. Through an understanding of the system of beliefs, the nature of rituals, and the kinds of symbolic meanings common to this religion, we can most likely arrive at an interpretation of the culture’s rock art. Absent this context as a starting point, the resulting interpretations stand a strong chance of representing little more than projections of Western biases, interests, and concerns onto non-Western traditional art.

Even if I have chosen shamanism as the starting point for my analysis, I have tried to remain sensitive to any observations that are in conflict with this hypothesis. On one hand, it is perfectly possible that a single culture has produced different kinds of art for different purposes. Even though the Finnish rock paintings appear rather homogenous in terms of style, location and subject matter, it may be unrealistic to expect that all of them could be fitted into a single, all-encompassing interpretation. However, on the other hand, I do not wish to downplay the ‘otherness’ of the Stone Age past. There is no reason to believe that the religious practices recorded in the historical period have remained unchanged for millennia. Even if there is an evident continuity, changes have probably occurred.

3.3 The concept of ‘shamanism’

The term ‘shamanism’, as it is generally used in anthropological literature, is derived from the Siberian Tungus (Evenk) word *šamān*, which refers to “a person who knows”. Shamanism, as defined in this dissertation, is however not to be understood as the archetypal, ahistorical shamanism advocated by Mircea Eliade (1964), nor does it have much to do with the all-encompassing nature-mysticism of ‘New Age’ shamanism (e.g., Harner 1980). Many different

definitions of shamanism have been offered both before and after Eliade's work. The definition adopted here corresponds closely to that of David Lewis-Williams (2003b), whose list of what shamanism entails is unusually detailed and lucid and is therefore worth quoting at length:

- Hunter-gatherer shamanism is fundamentally posited on a range of institutionalized altered states of consciousness.
- The visual, aural and somatic experiences of those states give rise to perceptions of an alternative reality that is frequently tiered (hunter-gatherers believe in spiritual realms above and below the world of daily life).
- People with special powers and skills, the shamans, are believed to have access to this alternative reality.
- The behaviour of the human nervous system in certain altered states creates the illusion of dissociation from one's body (less commonly understood in hunting and gathering shamanistic societies as possession by spirits).

Shamans use dissociation and other experiences of altered states to achieve at least four ends. Shamans are believed to

- contact spirits and supernatural entities,
- heal the sick,
- control the movement and lives of animals, and
- change the weather.

These four functions of shamans, as well as their entrance into an altered state of consciousness, are believed to be facilitated by supernatural entities that include:

- variously conceived supernatural potency, or power, and
- animal-helpers and other categories of spirits that assist shamans and are associated with potency.

(Lewis-Williams 2003b: 167)

All the above features listed by Lewis-Williams are also elements of both Saami (Itkonen 1948; Karsten 1952; Pentikäinen 1995) and Finnish (Siikala 2002a) shamanism recorded in the historical period. Like Price (2001: 6), I therefore think of shamanism as a very useful concept because it conveys in a single word a complex set of religious phenomena that would otherwise be difficult to discuss. Admittedly, however, the concept is also riddled with historical ballast, different definitions and over-heated academic debate, which make the use of the term somewhat problematic in contemporary archaeology.

Some anthropologists have argued that the term 'shamanism' should be associated with a culturally specific institution, and that projecting it onto all traditional healers on a global level has produced a false idea of a "primordial human religion". But as any review of shamanism (e.g., Vitebsky 2001) will reveal, there are certain religious phenomena commonly grouped under the label of shamanism that are repeated in astonishingly similar forms throughout the world – a fact possibly explained by neurological research. Nevertheless, there is a clear danger of sloppy or misguided use of the concept as a blanket term for forager religiosity in general. As Ouzman (1998: 33) states, theoretical and methodological caution is essential in studying forager shamanism, because shamanism – far from being a monolithic category – is enormously variable as regards content and expression. A number of scholars have described the recent use of shamanism in rock art research as a "one-size-fits-all assertion that hunter-gatherer shamans

created rock art to record their trance visions” (Kehoe 2002: 384-5; cf. Bahn 2001). Advocates of shamanistic interpretations, on the other hand, have accused the critics of distorting their arguments beyond recognition (e.g., Lewis-Williams 2003a). A fair assessment of the research situation might be that some uses of ‘shamanism’ in prehistoric archaeology may have been excessive but that few scholars would maintain that *all* hunter-gatherer rock art is shamanistic in nature.

In interpreting Finnish rock art as ‘shamanistic’, I emphasise the historically specific form of shamanism recorded in Fennoscandia, which should not be seen as identical with ‘shamanism’ as recorded in, for example, South Africa. Although the similarities between the two are striking and include all the elements listed by Lewis-Williams above, the kinds of ‘shamanhood’, rituals, beliefs and other expressions of these two shamanisms are different. It might be possible to devise some other term to denote the Finnic brand of shamanism, but so far none exists and attempts to create one are likely to be equally problematic. The institution of the shaman does have a traditional term in the Saami and Finnish languages (Western Saami *noaidi*, Finn. *noita*), and this word is moreover one of the small number of pan-Uralic words identified by historical linguistics (Siikala 2002b: 27). However, there is no traditional word for the ‘ism’, and in modern usage words like *noita* have derogatory and misleading connotations. Moreover, applying the word *noaidi* to a prehistoric ‘shaman’ would create the false impression that the historically recorded Saami institution is exactly similar to that which we encounter in the Fennoscandian Stone Age. The terms ‘shaman’ and ‘shamanism’ are scientifically neutral by comparison.

3.4 Reading Finnish rock art

As we saw above, the interpretation offered here consists of very different strands of evidence: ethnographic material, archaeological finds, iconographic analysis, neuropsychological and cognitive research, and so forth. As is often the case in archaeology, there are problems and weaknesses in many of the arguments as such, but when they are intertwined into a coherent ‘cable-like’ argument they become stronger (Wylie 1989; Lewis-Williams 2002: 102-04). Unlike in ‘chain-like’ arguments, a break in one strand of the ‘cable’ does not cause the entire argument to collapse, but the argument remains sustainable even with the difficult and fragmentary lines of evidence with which archaeologists typically work.

For example, the argument that Finnish rock art is shamanistic “because” shamanism was practiced in Finland in the historical period would be weak by itself. It would overlook the possibilities that the Stone Age inhabitants of Finland may bear no relationship to its modern inhabitants, or that shamanism itself may be a historically recent phenomenon. However, the argument can be supported by archaeological material that indicates long-term continuity in all forms of human culture in the present region Finland (Edgren 1993); by comparative linguistic and genetic research that similarly indicates long-term continuity in the region ([Paper IV](#)); by ethnographic evidence that associates shamans with the cult of sacred cliffs in Finland ([Paper III](#)); by archaeological evidence that suggests that a very similar cult already existed in the Stone Age ([Paper II](#)); by neurological research that indicates the universality and antiquity of altered states of consciousness ([Paper I](#)); by the identification of probable representations of trance-experiences in the art ([Paper I](#)); and by formal analogy with other hunter-gatherer groups, which indicates that such states are commonly institutionalized into ‘shamanic’ practices (Lewis-Williams 2002, chapters 5 and 6). Viewed together, I feel that these different strands of argument combine to produce a reasonably strong “cable” of interpretation.

3.4.1 Elk and human figures

To proceed to the interpretation, in the following, I attempt to gradually work from ‘strong’ or probable interpretations towards ‘weaker’ interpretations, which can then be supported by association with the stronger arguments. Perhaps the single strongest argument that associates the art with shamanism of the kind practised by the Saami are scenes that depict falling, diving and shape-changing anthropomorphs. The falling humans are usually accompanied by an elk, a fish or a snake. As I have argued in *Paper I* (pages 34-37 and 41-42), these scenes are an almost perfect match with Saami shamanism. The main spirit-helper beings of the *noaidi* were the supernatural deer, fish, snake and bird, which he would summon to his aid when he fell into a trance. The *noaidi* was also capable of assuming their shape. Falling, diving and shape-changing humans in Finnish rock art can, therefore, rather confidently be identified as representations of prehistoric shamans in the process of falling into trance, summoning their spirit-helper beings, and journeying to the Lower World.

Sometimes it is even possible to reconstruct a series of events, as in Fig. 25. These three scenes, taken from three different paintings, can be viewed together as a faithful representation of the different stages of subaquatic trance journeys – something that Saami *noaidi* were widely believed to be capable of (Itkonen 1948: 332-33, and cf. Appendix 1).

The identification of diving and falling human figures accompanied by a spirit animal demonstrates that *at least some in cases* (though not necessarily all):

- the paintings represent the events of a shamanic trance, and
- human figures represent shamans, and
- images of fish, birds, snakes and elk represent the zoomorphic spirit helpers of the shaman.

Importantly, in the light of these paintings the most common animal depicted in the art – the elk – can be interpreted as the *alter ego* of the shaman. Indeed, most nomadic peoples of northern Eurasia appear to have imagined the ‘soul animal’ of the shaman to manifest itself in the shape of either an elk or a deer. Here it is interesting to consider two scenes from the important painting at Värrikallio. Figure 26a shows a ‘fallen’ human figure from whose head an elk or a deer appears to jump upwards. The event is attended by two more cervids, a zig-zag-line (perhaps representing a spirit helper in the form of an adder; cf. section 3.4.3 below) and three dots. In *Paper I*, I have argued that this scene represents a shaman falling into a trance (the human figure). His soul is represented as escaping from his body in the shape of the upwards-jumping elk or deer, analogous to the supernatural deer (*sáiva sarva*) employed by the *noaidi* in their travels.

The second scene from Värrikallio (Fig. 26b) is a series of figures that – exceptionally for Finnish rock art – gives the impression of a time-sequenced narrative. The third figure from the bottom is particularly interesting, because it appears to be a combination of both human (lower body) and cervid features (upper body). In the light of what was said about the first scene from Värrikallio, it is probable that the figure represents a shaman transforming into an elk or a deer – an interpretation suggested already by Taavitsainen (1979) – and the entire series of figures may be understood as a narrative of a trance journey in the form of an elk. Two rock paintings in southern Finland, Juusjärvi and Pakanavuori, feature similar, upwards-rising sequences of images (Kivikäs 2000: 28-29, 68-69). Unfortunately, they are so poorly preserved that they are of much less use in interpretation.

In his important book on the Nämforsen carvings in Sweden, Christopher Tilley (1991: 127) found Saami ethnography irrelevant to the interpretation of the art for two main reasons. First,

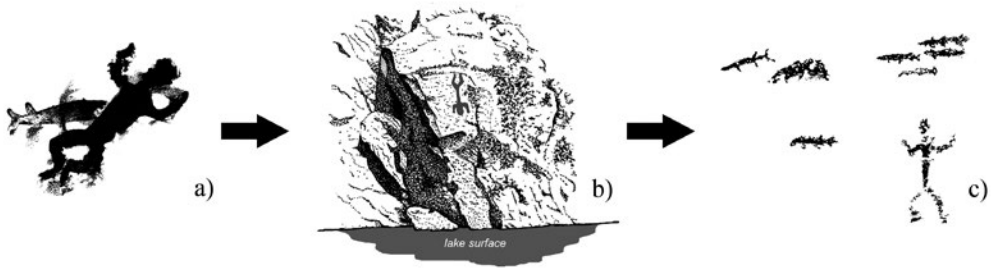


FIGURE 25. Journeys to a watery Underworld: a) a 'falling' human and a fish (pike?) at Juusjärvi (Kivikäs 2000: 109); b) a 'diving' human at Haukkavuori (Mäntyharju), drawn by Antti Lahelma; c) a human being surrounded by a shoal of fish at Kapasaari (Miettinen 2000: 131). These three images may be interpreted as representing different stages in the subaquatic shamanic journey: 1) falling into a trance and summoning the fish-shaped spirit helper, 2) diving into the waters below, and 3) swimming under water.

the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) had a vast symbolic significance for the Saami, but is absent in the Nämforsen carvings. Secondly, the elk plays a rather minimal role in Saami art and myth, but it is the most common animal depicted at Nämforsen. These arguments, however, are easy to counter. First, the bear did indeed have a special, cosmic significance in both Saami and Finnish mythology, but it did not play an important role in *shamanism*. Moreover, the reverence felt towards the bear was such that in traditional Saami and Finnish societies, merely uttering the word "bear" was prohibited (Pentikäinen 2007). It seems quite possible, then, that explicit pictorial depictions of the animal may have been similarly prohibited in prehistory.

Secondly, regarding the insignificant role of elk in Saami mythology, it should be remembered that the categorical distinction between elk and (rein)deer is a Western zoological notion. Simply judging by their physical attributes, the two animals are in many respects analogous. Both of them are large, hoofed, cervid herbivores, and in traditional Finnish *Kalevala*-metric poetry they are often presented as practically interchangeable (e.g., Oinas 1985: 154-9). Geographically speaking, reindeer (both wild and domesticated) are the most common cervid species in the mountainous Arctic, where most of Saami ethnography and myth has been recorded. Further south, in the sub-Arctic regions of Finland, Karelia and Swedish Norrland, elk are far more common. And indeed, the role of elk in Finnish-Karelian pre-Christian myth and religion is much more pronounced than among the Saami (see e.g., Holmberg 1927; Siikala 2002a, and cf. [Paper V](#)) – something of which Tilley (1991) seems to have been unaware.

From the point of view of this discussion, the evidence that the supernatural deer (*sáiva sarva*) and other 'familiar' of the Saami shaman were believed to dwell inside sacred cliffs and mountains is crucial, since it forms an obvious parallel between the religious notions of the Saami and those reflected in rock art. As an example, Jens Kildal (1683-1767), a Danish missionary to the Norwegian Saami, explains in his work *Afguderiets Dempelse* (ca. 1740) that:

When a shaman casts sorcery upon another, he uses especially *Vuornes lodde* ['predatory bird'], and *Passe vare guli* ['holy mountain fish'], for it, and also *Passe vare lodde* ['holy mountain fish']; or else, if it concerns great matters, he uses *Passe vare Sarva* ['holy mountain reindeer'], and *Passe vare Olmaj* ['holy mountain man'] ... and then *Passe vare Sarva* is used on both sides, as they are strong at fighting. The reason for this happening is that there is the custom among Lapps, that whichever *noaidi* [shaman] is proficient with his magic, in repulsing other *noaidis*, is chosen as the *noaidi* of the multitude, and then receives the general *noaidi* wage from each man... When two *noaidis* have sent their *sarvas*

out to fight against each other, then whatever happens to these fighting *sarvas* as far as winning or losing is concerned, the very same happens to the *noaidis* themselves for their victory, or defeat; if the one *sarva* breaks the horn from the other *sarva*, then that *noaidi* becomes sick whose *sarva*'s horn is broken off; if the one *sarva* slays the other, then the *noaidi* dies whose *sarva* was killed; it also happens in this fight that however tired and worn out a *sarva* becomes, the *noaidi* that the *sarva* is fighting for becomes tired and worn out to the same extent. (Translated by Tolley 1994: 149-50)¹⁰

A similar, if only dimly conceived idea of (rein)deer that live inside rock cliffs appears to have been preserved in traditional Finnish poetry. Markku Korteniemi (1997: 41) has drawn attention to a peculiar Finnish-Karelian folk poem concerning the 'origin' of the reindeer:

The origin of reindeer lies in Northland [i.e., *the Otherworld*]
 Its antlers grew out of the rock cliff
 Its horns from a crack in the rock,
 Inside which the givers dwell
 The mistresses reside.
 (SKVR I: 1116, my translation)¹¹

This poem is also interesting for a second reason: it informs us that rock cliffs were also the dwelling-places of 'mistresses' that 'give' something (game?). This recalls the female 'huntress' of Astuvansalmi (fig 2b in [Paper I](#)), mentioned above. Here I concur with Siikala's (1981) interpretation: it is likely that it represents a 'mistress of the hunt' or a supernatural 'keeper' of the elk species, thought to live inside the rock. Given the bow held in her hand, it also suggests a comparison with the Saami goddess of midwifery and birth, *Juoksáhkka* ('Bow-lady'). A similar representation of a 'bow-lady' has been identified in the rock painting at Ruksesbákti, Northern Norway (Hebba Helberg 2004: 2).

In many cases, however, the meanings of a motif appear polysemic. The meanings depend on the context, making it difficult to generalise about the interpretations of certain rock art motifs. The human figures are a case in point. To take one example, in the painting at Kolmiköytisienvuori (Fig. 27), we find two kinds of human figures: large and small, represented in different kinds of scenes. The uppermost human figure I have interpreted as a shaman who has summoned a spirit helper in the form of a snake and is in the process of assuming its shape ([Paper I](#): 35-36, and cf. the discussion below). However, the two human figures underneath seem to require a different interpretation. If size is an indication of power or importance, as is often the case in pre-Renaissance and non-Western art forms, this could indicate that they represent

10 "Naar Noyden setter gan ud paa andre, da bruger hand fornemmelig Vurnes lodde, og Passe vare guli der til, endelig og Passe vare lodde; ellers naar det angaar store ting, setter hand og Passe vare Sarva, og Passe vare Olmaj ud [...] og da settes Passe vare Sarve ud paa begge sider, saa som de ere sterke til at gaae i strid. Naar saadant skier, da er det aarsagen, at der er den skik iblant lapper, at hvad for en Noyd, som er god for med sin gan, at holde andre Noyder fra sig, hand bliver udvalt til menighedens Noyd, og da faar den almindelige aarlige noyde-løn af hver mand. [...] Naar nu 2 Noyder har hver sat sin Sarva ud til striid mot hverandre, da gaar det saaledes til, at just det samme som overgaar disse stridende Sarva til at vinde, eller tabe, det selvsamme overgaard Noyderne selv til seyer, eller ikke seyer; stanger den ene Sarva hornet af den anden, da bliver den noyd syg, hvis Sarvas horn blev afstanget; dræber den ene Sarva den anden, da dør den Noyd, hvis Sarva blev dræbt; det skier og i denne striid, at saa træet, og udmattet, som en stridende Sarva bliver, saa træet og udmattet bliver den Noyd, som hand (samme sarva) strider for."

11 "Poron on synty Pohjolassa / Kasvo sen sarvet kalliosta / Kippurat kiven kolosta / Siellä net antajat asuvi, / Elelee emäntävaimot."

super-human beings. This invites a comparison with the ‘holy mountain man’, mentioned by Kildal (cf. the quotation above). The sacred rock or cliff (*sieidi*) itself could sometimes also assume the shape of a human being. For example, the 17th century priest Johannes Tornaeus (ca. 1600-81), an energetic missionary in Finnish Lapland, gives the following account in which a *sieidi* (called ‘storjunkare’ in the text) manifests itself as a tall nobleman:

[The Saami] say that the *storjunkare* has often manifested itself to fishermen or fowlers in the shape of a beautiful and tall man, dressed in a black *junkare* [nobleman’s] clothing and holding a small firearm in its hand, but with legs resembling those of a bird. When it materializes either standing on a shore or in their boats, it produces good fishing luck. And when birds fly by, it shoots them and offers them to the Saami. (Tornaeus 1672; cited in Schefferus [1979: 102], my translation).

Apart from size, some anthropomorphs have other special features that indicate a special category of human figure. The most common example are the ‘horned’ human figures, already briefly discussed in section 3.1. As mentioned, the common and rather unhesitant identification of these figures as ‘shamans’ (e.g., Siikala 1981) has been questioned because Saami shamans of the historical period did not have a specific shaman costume, let alone horned headgear (Autio 1995). This argument is not very strong, however, because in the face of Christian persecution, the Saami may have abandoned wearing a distinct shaman costume as early as the medieval period. It is worth pointing out that discoveries of ‘shaman graves’ of the historical period in Northern Fennoscandia do sometimes include evidence of a shaman costume (e.g., Kopisto 1971). No evidence of special headgear has been found so far, however.

Yet the question of how the horned anthropomorphs should be interpreted is more complex than it may appear. It is not even clear that the two strokes in fact represent horns – they might, for example, represent feathers, hair or some sort of ‘rays’ of energy projecting from the head. The last suggestion is not as strange as it may seem. In the rock paintings of the Canadian Shield, where some traditional knowledge of the meaning of rock art has survived,

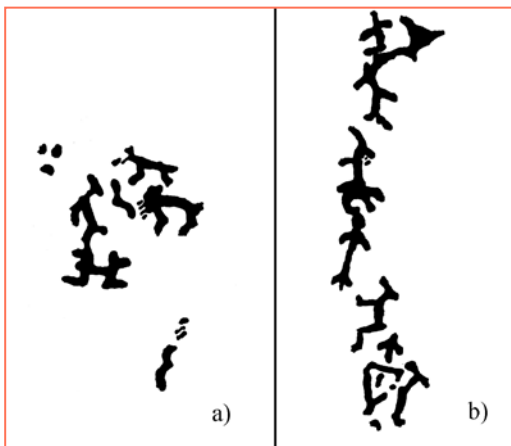


FIGURE 26. Two scenes from the important painting at Värrikallio, North-Eastern Finland: a) a ‘fallen’ human figure from whose head an elk or a deer jumps upwards, surrounded by other figures. b) a rare example of a series of seemingly interconnected images. Tracings according to Taavitsainen (1979).

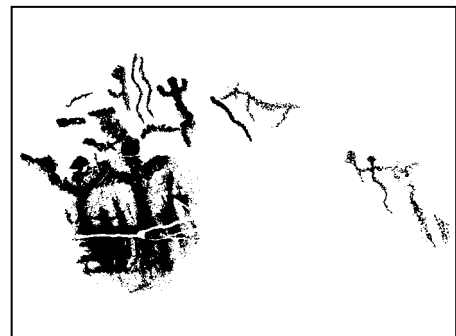


FIGURE 27. Large humans, snakes and human-snake therianthropes in the rock painting at Kolmiköytisienvuori. According to Miettinen (1977).

similar ‘horns’ painted on human figures represent exactly that – a sort of supernatural wisdom and potency emanating from those shamans who were thought to be exceptionally powerful (Rajnovich 1994: 92-97). These paintings are, of course, geographically located very far away from Finland (even if they arguably belong to the same ‘circumpolar rock art belt’, cf. section 2.1), and the analogy is thus of inspirational value only. But it is interesting to find that, as Autio (1995: 13) himself points out, on Saami shaman drums the representations of divinities or other particularly powerful anthropomorphic beings do often have two or more ‘horns’ on their heads, perhaps symbolic of their exceptional power.

Returning back to Finland, while the ‘horns’ certainly cannot be regarded as realistic depictions of elk antlers, some elk figures (such as Fig. 11d) do have similar ‘horns’ (or ‘rays’) projecting upwards from their heads. In the painting at Verla, moreover, we find a small horned anthropomorph ‘riding’ an elk figure, which also has horns on its head (see fig. 8b in [Paper V](#)). Such images suggest that the ‘horned’ anthropomorphs are conceptually linked to the elk figures. In the light of what was written about elk figures above, the interpretation of horned anthropomorphs as shamans (perhaps particularly powerful ones) thus seems plausible enough.

3.4.2 Boats

The boat figures of Finnish rock art are rather more difficult to interpret than the representations of humans and elk, but as I have argued in [Paper V](#), at least some of the boats (and possibly all of them) can be interpreted as the shaman’s vehicles to the Otherworld. In Siberian shamanism, boats occur in this function, as pointed out by Siikala (1980) and exemplified by the metal decorations of certain shaman costumes (Fig. 29). Saami ethnographic data in favour of this interpretation is less clear than in the case of the cervids – a fact that may be related to changes in religious ideas. The study by Seitsonen (2005a) reviewed in section 2.6 above showed that the representations of boat images decrease over time, while cervids become increasingly more common. This observation might go some way towards explaining why the evidence for boat symbolism in Saami and Finnish shamanism is rather limited compared to many other circumpolar peoples. A similar development appears to be recorded even in the



FIGURE 28. A part of the rock painting of Ruominkapia. Note the boat figure behind a poorly preserved elk figure in the central part of the painting, apparently moving either up or down. According to Sarvas & Taavitsainen (1976).

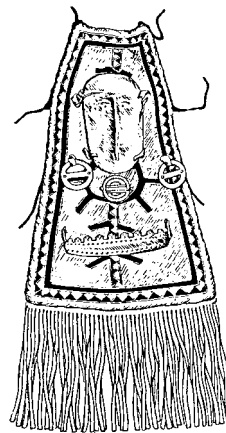


FIGURE 29. A Part of a Nganasan shaman's costume, with a boat-shaped metal decoration. According to Gračeva (1978).

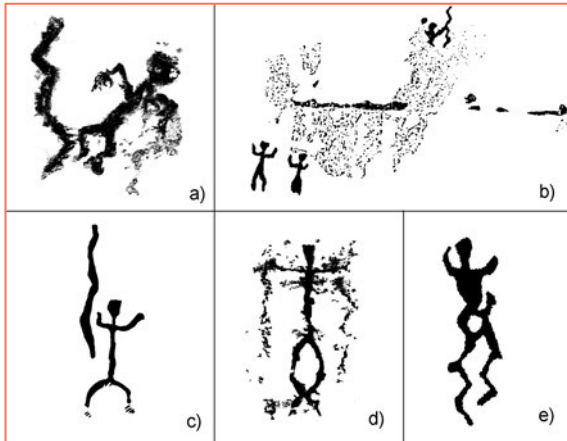


FIGURE 30. Humans and zigzag-lines probably representing adders: a) a 'falling' human figure and a zigzag-line at Mertakallio (Kivikäs 2000: 107); b) the painting of Salminkallio, with a human figure holding a zigzag-line in the uppermost part of the painting (Kivikäs 1995: 306); c) a human figure holding (?) a snake-like zigzag-line at Keltavuori (Taavitsainen 1977b: 211); d) a human figure holding two zigzag-lines, Ristnimenvuori (Kivikäs 2000: 25); e) a human figure from the painting of Juusjärvi (Luho 1964), with a lower body formed by a zigzag-line and a second zigzag-line running parallel to it. Different scales.

historical sources concerning Saami shamanism. Boats, snow shoes and deer are mentioned as the vehicles of the Saami *noaidi* in the Early Medieval *Historia Norvegiae* (Appendix 1), but in 17th and 18th century sources, boats (and snow shoes) are rarely mentioned in this context (Tolley 1994). It seems, then, that boats have steadily become less and less important as the supernatural vehicles of the *noaidi*.

The argument behind the interpretation of rock art boats as vehicles of the shaman may seem complex, but it explains neatly many of the stranger aspects of the boat figures, such as their association with elk. Here I will merely draw attention to one of the boat figures in the painting at Ruominkapia, which – in contrast to the normal, horizontally painted images – appears to be moving downwards (as indicated by what appears to be an extended keel or a paddle in the upper end of the image). In the real world, of course, boats only move down if they sink. The painting at Ruominkapia must then be understood either as a commemorative painting of a boating accident, or as a representation of an imaginary boat that travels towards the subaquatic Lower World. Given the general infrequency of commemorative paintings in Finnish rock art, the fact that the iconographic context of the boat does not suggest a representation of a 'real world' event (there is an elk depicted *below* the boat), and the fact that the human figures discussed above also suggest that underwater journeys were depicted in the art, it is quite probable that this image represents the boat in its 'spiritual' function as the shaman's vehicle to the Otherworld (cf. [Paper V](#)).

3.4.3 Geometric figures

From the point of view of interpretation, the geometric figures are the most difficult group of images. An abstract, geometric figure obviously offers few clues to interpretation. In some cases (such as zigzag lines, parallel lines and a few net figures), they may conceivably derive from 'entoptic' visions, but a hallucinatory origin tells us relatively little about the meaning of such symbols. Importantly, not all of these geometric symbols can be related to entoptic imagery, but some of them may be related to Saami art. Here I will discuss three such symbols: oblique crosses, zigzag lines and the Vitträsk nets.

An oblique cross, of course, is a very simple symbol that may well have been 'invented' or re-interpreted several times in the prehistoric and historical periods. But given the many similarities between *sieidi* and rock art sites, it may nevertheless be more than a simple coincidence that oblique crosses are occasionally carved on both wooden and stone *sieidi* (Fig. 31a, and cf. fig. 84 in Manker 1971a). Their interpretation is unclear, but it should be mentioned

that on Saami drums an oblique cross with a ring on each arm symbolises the *noaide-dirri*, an “instrument of witchcraft” that only the most powerful of the *noaidi* are said to have used (Manker 1950: 133). Apparently, it was thought of as a kind of a magical insect or projectile shot by the *noaidi* at their enemies, comparable to the *gandfluge* mentioned in Old Norse sources.

The zigzag lines (Figs. 32a & c) form an interesting link between representational and geometric (entoptic?) imagery. A scene in the rock painting at Mertakallio gives us an important clue to their meaning. The ‘falling’ human figure of Mertakallio (Fig. 30a), juxtaposed with a zigzag line, finds an obvious parallel in the painting at Kolmiköytisienvuori (Fig. 27). However, at Kolmiköytisienvuori, the ‘falling’ human figure has a snake-like lower body, and the figure next to it is an anatomically accurate representation of a snake. Together with the human figure of Juusjärvi (Fig. 30e), where the lower body is formed by a zigzag line, this image makes the meaning of the zigzag lines rather clear. They symbolize a snake or, to be more precise, the adder (*Vipera berus*). On a different level, they symbolize the adder-shaped spirit helper of the shaman.

This is an important conclusion because it offers an explanation to the human figures that are shown apparently holding a zigzag line in their hand (Figs. 30b-d). These scenes can now be interpreted as the shaman with his or her adder-shaped spirit helper, comparable to the supernatural snake of the Saami *noaidi*. The ‘snake-humans’ of Kolmiköytisienvuori and Juusjärvi, on the other hand, can be understood as representing the shaman in the process of assuming

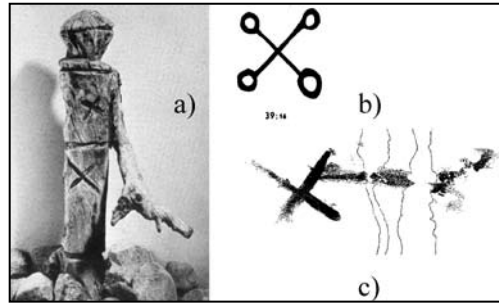


FIGURE 31. Oblique crosses in Saami art and Finnish rock art: a) the wooden sieidi of Överstjuktan, Northern Sweden, found in 1925 (Manker 1970: 62); b) a representation of the *noaide-dirri* from Manker’s drum number 39 (Manker 1950: 133), c) an oblique cross from the rock painting of Astuvansalmi (Kivikäs 2000: 39).

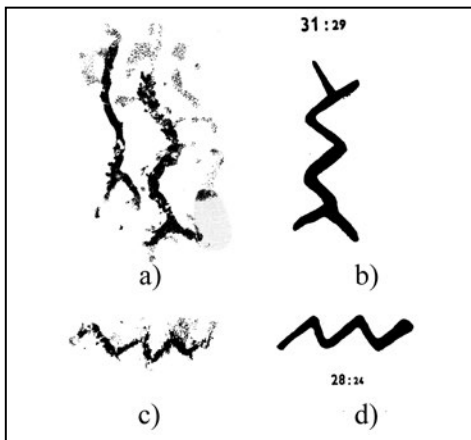


FIGURE 32. Probable representations of adder-shaped spirit helpers in Saami drums (on the right) and Finnish rock art (on the left): a) the rock painting of Vaskivuori (Kivikäs 2000: 105), b) Manker’s drum 31 (Manker 1950: 26), c) the rock painting of Saraakallio (Kivikäs 1997: 38), d) Manker’s drum 28 (Manker 1950: 30). Different scales.

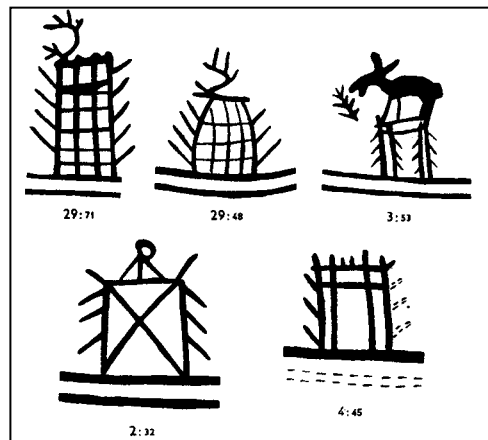


FIGURE 33. Representations of sacrificial platforms in Saami drums, with an elk, reindeer or an ‘idol’ represented on top (according to Manker 1950: 121). Compare these with fig. 16.

the shape of the adder in order to move to the Otherworld. Significantly, similar zigzag lines are used to represent the ‘snake of the *noaidi*’ on Saami shaman drums (Figs. 32 b & d). It is also of significance that in the *Kalevala*-metric poems, the shaman Väinämöinen is described as being able to transform himself into an adder (Siikala 2002a: 302; see also [Paper I](#): 37) and that the very word for “adder” (Finn. *kyy*) sometimes acts as a synonym for a shaman (Finn. *noita*) in the poems (e.g., SKVR I4: 495). The kinds of places that allowed access to the Otherworld for the adder-shaped shaman are suggested by the painting at Salminkallio (Fig. 30b, and cf. [Paper IV](#): 10-11), where a long horizontal crack in the cliff face has been emphasised with red ochre.

Saami drum figures also offer a clue to the meaning of one of the most enigmatic of symbols in Finnish rock art: the net figures at Vitträsk found by Sibelius in 1911 (Fig. 16a). Luho (1971: 15) has pointed out that certain conventionalised figures used on the Saami drums to represent sacrificial platforms (*luovve*) bear a resemblance to the Vitträsk nets. The parallel is not as obvious as Luho makes it appear, because the representations of these platforms are quite variable and only some of them resemble the Vitträsk figures (cf. fig. 57 in Manker 1950). However, the ‘net figure’ found at Alta (Fig. 16b), which is almost identical to the Vitträsk nets, provides additional evidence that his observation may have been correct after all. The Alta figure indicates that the symbol is somehow related to cervids, as a reindeer figure is partially merged with the ‘net’. The drum figures are exactly similar in this respect: many of them also show a reindeer or an elk either standing on top of the platform or partially merged into it (Fig. 33). It is possible, then, that both the Vitträsk nets and the Alta figure represent sacrificial platforms or, more generally, signify a sacred site or a place of worship.

In the above discussion, an interpretation was offered for most of the motifs of Finnish rock art. We are left with one significant group only – the human handprints. As they seem to be closely related to the question why the paintings were produced in the first place, they deserve to be discussed in a separate chapter.

3.5 “A touch of red”

Handprints are probably the single most common motif in world rock art, but unlike most other motifs, handprints are not strictly speaking either representational or abstract art. Handprints are not ‘pictures of hands’ (Lewis-Williams 2002: 161) or indeed of anything; instead, they record and make public the act of touching the rock. But why was touching the rock important?

If Finnish rock art consists largely of depictions of spirit beings thought to live inside rock cliffs, as I have argued, then touching may be associated with a desire to tap into their supernatural potency. The sacred cliff in general – and pictures of spirit beings in particular – may have been thought of as repositories of supernatural power that the shamans could access. This aspect of the paintings is further indicated by the fact that the handprints are often superimposed particularly on paintings of elk (Fig. 34), and by the fact that some of the rock paintings appear ‘smeared’. All in all, it seems that most of the paintings – particularly of elk – were not only to be looked at, but also *to be touched*.

Although trance visions may be emotionally powerful for the individual, they are, of course, fundamentally subjective. To be of any relevance to the society at large, they must somehow be socialised, and this is where ‘art’ enters the picture. In other words, the creation of Finnish rock art may be related to an effort to socialize shamanic trance experiences for the other members of the community. In a society where pictorial representations of any kind must have been scarce (at least compared to ours), the emotional impact of even a simple red ochre painting may have been great. One aim of producing rock art could then have been to inspire

awe, to underline the difference between shamans and non-shamans, and thereby to consolidate the social power and spiritual leadership of the shaman-institution (Ipsen 1995: 393-4). On a different level, the cration of the paintings may also have had a complementary, esoteric purpose related to initiation rites: the passing of spiritual knowledge from one generation of shamans to another. Moreover, the red ochre paint itself may form a part of the explanation. Red ochre was probably conceived of as a potent substance. It was used in contemporary burials (Edgren 1993: 59-65) and clay idols (Núñez 1986), and much later, the figures on the Saami shaman drums were painted red with alder bark juice (Manker 1971a). The colour red bears obvious associations with blood and life, perhaps also with the visionary imagery of a deep trance, in which the colour red is said to be pronounced (Stahl 1986: 144-45). Using red paint may thus have enhanced the power of the ritual.

Why, then, did some cliffs come to be viewed as sacred and as the dwelling-places of spirits? This is one of the most difficult questions related to Finnish rock art. In the papers that form this dissertation, I have suggested three possible reasons:

- Most of the cliffs are impressively high (at least given the generally flat Finnish landscape), natural landmarks that are located on the borderline between the three elements of earth, water and sky. This may have contributed to an idea that such places function as gateways between the different levels of the tiered cosmos, and between the worlds of humans and spirits. In other words, the cliffs may have been symbolic of the ‘World Mountain’ ([Paper I: 40](#)).
- The straight rock walls of waterfront cliffs produce startling echoes which may have been associated with spirits, as is the case in many pre-industrial societies (Waller 2002). There is some evidence for such beliefs associated with echoing among the Saami, too ([Paper III](#)).
- Some of the cliffs appear to be anthropomorphic in shape, which may have made such places attention-grabbing, anomalous and even numinous in the eyes of Stone Age hunter-gatherers. This may have contributed to a notion that not only were they inhabited by specific spirit-helper beings, but also the cliffs themselves may have been thought of as living beings ([Papers II and III](#)).

The excavations in front of a rock painting on the island of Valkeisaari ([Paper II](#)) gave an intriguing parallel with the famous island *sieidi* of Ukonsaari (or simply *Ukko*) on Lake Inari, Northern Finland. Like the Saami of Lake Inari, it seems that the prehistoric inhabitants of Lake

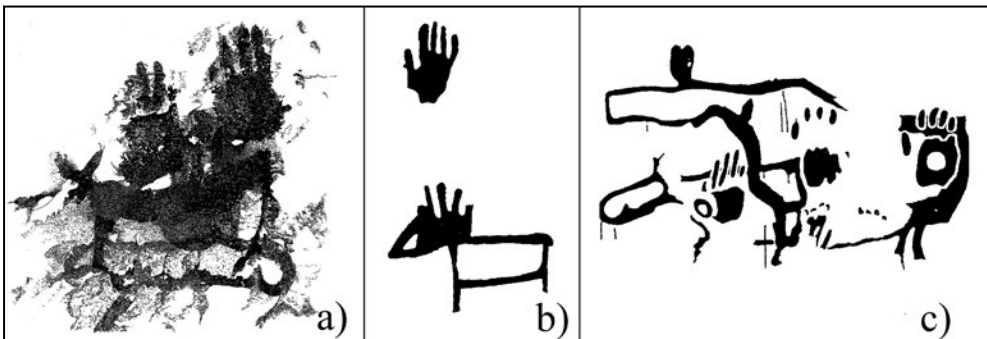


FIGURE 34. Elks and handprints: a) three handprints pressed on an elk figure at Sarakaallio (Kivikäs 2000: 115), b) two handprints at Astuvansalmi, one of them pressed on an elk figure (Sarvas 1969, part of group k), c) five (?) handprints pressed on two elk figures at Astuvansalmi (Sarvas 1969, part of group f).

Saimaa region have repeatedly taken food to the island in order to cook it there in front of the sacred site. Recent excavations at Ukonsaari have brought to light remains of the sacrificial meals that the Saami shared with the god of the island. As I have argued in Paper II, something very similar may have taken place in Valkeisaari also.

If we compare the Finnish rock painting sites with contemporary and thematically similar rock carving sites in Karelia and Swedish Norrland, a number of interesting observations can be made. First, in this region of Northern Fennoscandia, the painting sites are much more numerous than sites with rock carvings, but the number of rock art figures at painting sites is much smaller than in the ‘megasites’ of Nämforsen, Lake Onega or the River Vyg. Second, as noted in section 2.2, the large carving sites are associated with large settlements located in an accessible terrain, where as the painting sites are located in difficult, remote terrain, generally at a fair distance from the nearest dwelling site. These differences probably indicate differences in the function of the art and the ritual context in which it was created. It might be suggested, then, that at least in Sweden and Finland, rock paintings may be associated with comparatively small-scale hunting bands, shamans and individual vision quests. Large carving sites, on the other hand, may reflect the large communal (calendric?) rituals – requiring large open spaces for people to gather – of more complex, semi-sedentary groups of hunter-fishermen (Lahelma 2007a: 34-36).

4 CONCLUSION

Occasionally, one encounters the claim that the study of rock art is fundamentally more speculative than other kinds of archaeology, and that any interpretations of such material are therefore more or less equally beyond the reach of scientific reasoning. This idea is mistaken. Because rock art hypotheses make claims about observable phenomena (painted or carved images), they can potentially be checked and, following a careful evaluation, some of them can be selected as the most plausible hypotheses (Whitley 2006: 72). As such, rock art hypotheses are no less scientific than any other hypotheses made in archaeology.

A comparison of the three main hypotheses made about the ‘meaning’ of Finnish rock art is illustrated in figure 35. In the light of the evidence reviewed, it is clear that the totemism hypothesis does not fit. The main problem with interpreting the art as an expression of totemism is that the paintings should obviously represent more than one clan (the elk); the small numbers of representations of fish and other animals do not support the idea that these are clan symbols (Layton 2000). Additionally, if images of elk did represent an elk clan, one would expect to find them in a geographically limited area – not at the majority of rock art sites in Finland. And finally, the totemistic reading presented by Autio (1995) does not even attempt to explain such figures as boats or handprints.

Moreover, the purported ethnographic evidence for totemism among the Kola Saami (Autio 1993a) and elsewhere in the circumpolar region is open to question because it is largely based on the writings of Soviet ethnographers. This is a problem because, owing to its roots in Victorian evolutionist anthropology, orthodox Marxist theory *required* Soviet anthropologists to find ‘survivals’ of totemism among contemporary peoples. Totemism was regarded as one of the necessary stages of social development based on Lewis Henry Morgan’s unilinear model of cultural evolution – one of the politically imposed dogmas of Soviet anthropology that scholars were expected to confirm (see, e.g., Shimkin 1949). In contrast to Soviet scholars, the eminent Swedish historian of religion Åke Hultrantz (1986) has asserted that there is no evidence of totemism whatsoever among the hunter-gatherer groups of Northern Eurasia.

This rejection of totemism as an explanatory model, of course, only applies to ‘totemism’ as it is generally understood in rock art research and in the tradition of 20th century anthropology that stems from the work of Émile Durkheim (1964). Other views on totemism, such as that discussed by Tim Ingold (2000) in which totemism is related to an “understanding of the relationship between the ancestors, the land which is the enduring form of their presence, and the living beings it engenders” (Ingold 2000: 113), fall beyond the scope of this study.

The hunting magic hypothesis explains more aspects of the art than totemism but has several major flaws, not the least of which is the fact that the very concept of sympathetic magic (‘like produces like’), on which the theory is based, has long ago been dismissed as a Victorian fantasy based on poor ethnography and misguided notions of ‘primitive mentality’ (e.g., Lewis-Williams 1982). It is interesting to find, though, that not all serious scholars have abandoned the notion of sympathetic magic: the South African archaeologist Francis Thackeray (2005) has recently defended the theory in his interpretation of a rock art site in Lesotho. Unlike most other applications of the hunting-magic theory, Thackeray’s argument is based on a detailed use of ethnographic and linguistic evidence (the validity of which I am not competent to judge) and therefore seems to merit serious consideration. It seems doubtful, however, that even a careful reading of the ethnographic record will make it possible to combine the notion of *compelling animals to do something by magical means* with the basic hunter-gatherer ideology

<i>Does it explain the depictions and relative frequencies of...</i>	SHAMANISM & LOCAL ETHNOGRAPHY	HUNTING MAGIC	TOTEMISM
<i>... elk?</i>	yes	yes	no
<i>...human figures?</i>	yes	no	some
<i>...boats?</i>	yes	no	no
<i>...fish?</i>	yes	yes	no
<i>...birds?</i>	yes	yes	no
<i>...snakes and lizards?</i>	yes	no	no
<i>...non-cervid mammals?</i>	some	yes	no
<i>...handprints?</i>	yes	no	no
<i>...geometric signs?</i>	some	no	no
<i>... 'unrealistic' figures and scenes?</i>	yes	no	some
<i>Does it explain other aspects of rock art, such as...</i>			
<i>...location at lakeshore cliffs?</i>	yes	yes	no
<i>...associated finds?</i>	some	some	no
<i>...anthropomorphic cliffs?</i>	yes	no	no

FIGURE 35. A comparison of competing hypotheses in interpreting Finnish rock art.

of *reciprocity and negotiating with nature* (cf. Ingold 2000). These ideas would seem to reflect two ways of thinking about human-environment relations that are fundamentally opposed to each other.

I am not aware of any evidence for sympathetic hunting magic in Saami ethnography, and there are not many aspects in the art itself to support this idea either. In fact, hunting scenes or wounded animals are never depicted in Finnish rock art. The hunting magic hypothesis can perhaps be seen to offer an explanation to the representations of elk and some other animal species, and it has something to say about the location of the sites, which has been associated with springtime elk hunting on skis (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976; Taavitsainen 1978). However, it has rather little to say about the images of boats, humans (who lack hunting equipment), snakes, handprints or geometric symbols. Most problematic of all is the inability of the theory to account for 'unrealistic' figures and scenes, such as therianthropes or the 'elk-boats with legs' at Saraakallio.

The discoveries of broken (and whole) projectile points at rock paintings in both Sweden and Finland are an interesting line of evidence that has sometimes been cited as clear evidence for 'hunting magic' (e.g., Sarvas 1969). It is not really clear if the arrows were actually shot at the images of elk, as Hansson (2006) interprets the results of his excavations at the Swedish rock painting site of Flatruet. They could have been deposited as sacrificial offerings and broken by post-depositional processes (as I suggested in [Paper III](#)). But even if they were shot at the rock, this does not necessarily imply imitative hunting magic. If the cliff was indeed thought of as a living being, as I have argued in [Papers II and III](#), the arrows could have been shot at the cliff in an attempt to 'kill' it (or the spirit beings thought to dwell inside). Saami ethnography, again, provides us a parallel: if the *sieidi* were perceived as malicious, they are known to have sometimes been 'killed' by burning or rolling them into a lake (Itkonen 1948: 319-20).

As noted in section 3.2, the view that the paintings are related to a North Fennoscandian variant of shamanism was chosen as an initial hypothesis in this work. In the light of the above discussion and the papers that form this dissertation, I believe that my initial hypothesis has been confirmed. True, comparisons with Saami or Finnish shamanism do not explain every motif or scene in the art – for example, certain non-cervid animals, such as the fox of Uutelanvuori, do not appear to find obvious parallels in the ethnography. Given the chronological differences, however, some discrepancy between the archaeology and the ethnography is only to be expected. Shamanism and local ethnography offer a best-fit explanation for nearly all central motifs and pictorial combinations represented in the art, and also serve very well in explaining other features of the rock art, such as its location and associated finds. This does not exclude the possibility that some paintings were made for reasons that are unrelated to shamanism, but the number of such sites is likely to be small. Perhaps the best example is formed by the painting of Halsvuori (Fig. 36), the location of which (as noted in section 2.2) is unique for Finnish rock art. The painting represents two human figures, each of them holding some smallish mammal (beaver?) by the neck. Given the unusual location, it may well be that this is a representation of a (sacred or secular) “hunting story”, as Miettinen (1982: 68-9) suggests.

However, given the overall homogeneity of the art, the main reason for producing rock art is likely to have been uniform. A few exceptional sites aside, most Finnish rock art can be associated with a religious complex that involved shamanism, the ‘animistic’ notion that the painted cliffs are ‘living stone persons’, and an associated sacrificial cult, all of which are quite probably ancestral to (but not identical with) those practiced by the Saami in the historical period. Significantly, some aspects of local ethnohistorical sources seem to provide ‘inside information’ concerning the meaning of this art. Although the ethnographic sources include few explicit references to rock art (a few possible cases were discussed in [Paper IV](#)), the religious imagery of historical sources and rock art are so closely paralleled, and the cults of the *sieidi* and of the painted rocks so similar, that an ethnographically informed approach to interpretation is here considered valid. This is an extremely rare situation in European rock art research (Chippindale 2000), and should encourage Nordic archaeologists to become more aware of the ethnography, much of which still remains unexplored.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 36. The unusual rock painting of Halsvuori, Central Finland. According to Timo Miettinen (1982).

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PAPER I



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Between the Worlds. Rock Art, Landscape and Shamanism in Subneolithic Finland

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The Finnish rock paintings, dated to ca. 5000–1500 cal. BC, form a significant but so far relatively poorly known body of rock art in Northern Europe. The paintings are made with red ochre on steep cliffs rising at lakeshores and typically feature images of elks, men, boats, handprints and geometric designs. Traditional interpretations associate the art with shamanism. This interpretation, it is argued, finds additional support from the presence of a group of images that appear to portray experiences of metamorphosis, of falling in trance and of summoning zoomorphic spirit helper beings. Moreover, the location of the paintings can similarly be viewed in the light of a shamanistic cosmology. Ethnographic analogies are sought in aspects of Saami shamanism and the cult of the *sieidi*, rock formations worshipped as expressing a supernatural power.

THE ROCK ART OF FINLAND

Finland has the largest accumulation of prehistoric rock paintings in Northern Europe. More than one hundred¹ sites have been found to date, the first one of them in 1911 (Taskinen 2000). The paintings are made with red ochre on steep vertical surfaces of granitic rock, nearly always located at lakeshores, often rising straight from the water. Although a couple of sites are associated with small cavities, the majority of the paintings are in the open air. Their remarkable preservation in the harsh Finnish climate has been permitted by the formation of a thin, transparent silica skin on top of the red ochre paint (Taavitsainen & Kinnunen 1979).

The fact that the paintings are so intimately connected with the shoreline has enabled many of them to be dated with the shore-displacement method. The initial

datings proposed during the 1960s and 70s gave a rather wide time-span for the rock art tradition, extending from the Early Neolithic to as late as AD 500 (Saarnisto 1969, Carpelan 1975, Taavitsainen & Kinnunen 1979). More recent datings (Jussila 1999), however, suggest that the vast majority – if not all – of Finnish rock paintings were made between 7000 and 3500 years ago. The age of the rock art thus falls mostly within the period of Comb Ware (c. 5100–3300 cal. BC), a phase of Subneolithic hunting-gathering-fishing culture.

Although the rock paintings are often located in striking or impressive natural settings, most of the paintings themselves are relatively modest, rarely having more than 10 identifiable images. And while the paint can sometimes be bright and the images well defined, many are faded, eroded and for the untrained eye difficult to detect. Three paintings – Astuvansalmi in eastern

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Finland, Väräkallio in the north-east and Saraakallio on Lake Päijänne in central Finland – are exceptionally large ‘mega-sites’. Of these, the paintings of Astuvansalmi and Väräkallio have more than 60 images each, Saraakallio perhaps as many as a hundred. However, blurred contours and faded paint make counting difficult.

The majority of the rock paintings are found in the eastern Finnish Lake Region, particularly in the area of Lake Saimaa (Fig. 1), although a significant number of finds have been made in Central Finland also (Kivikäs 1995, 2001). A small but growing number of paintings lie clearly outside this main area of rock art. Four paintings have been discovered in the vicinity of Helsinki, two in northern Finland close to the eastern border, and another two paintings in the south-western part of the country. These finds suggest that the current distribution of sites may in part be a consequence of more active fieldwork in the Lake Region.

Although many of the best known sites had been found by the 1960s and 70s, new

sites continue to be found on a yearly basis; however, more by chance than due to systematic surveys. Surveying specifically for rock art has been rare in Finland. In the spring of 2003, a small-scale survey project, with only two weeks of fieldwork, yielded six new rock art sites from the province of Päijät-Häme, where only one site was known previously (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004). This suggests that many more may still be found in the future.

Contrary to the rock arts of neighbouring Sweden, Norway and Russian Karelia, Finnish rock art consists solely of rock paintings. No certain prehistoric carvings have been found so far, with the exception of simple cup-marks.² This lack of rock carvings is somewhat puzzling, given the plentiful smooth rock outcrops perfect for carving and the relatively close cultural contacts that parts of Finland enjoyed with areas where rock carving traditions flourished. It is thus commonly believed that carvings probably exist even in Finland, but simply have not been found yet. Cup-marked stones, found in the southern and central parts of the country, are an interesting exception to this rule (Tvauri 1995). The stones, which number in the hundreds, are often found in association with Iron Age remains and are thus generally dated no earlier than the Iron Age. However, in at least one instance cup-marks have been found in the bedrock under an Early Metal Period (1900 BC–300 AD) burial cairn (Pohjakallio 1978), giving a rough *terminus ante quem* to the advent of the cup-making tradition in Finland.

Relatively little has so far been published about Finnish rock art in languages other than Finnish or Swedish (see however Sarvas 1969, Taavitsainen 1977a, b, Siikala 1981, Núñez 1995, Ipsen 1995, Autio 1995, Kivikäs 2001, Kare 2001, 2002). On the whole, the subject has not received very much attention from Finnish archaeologists, but has, especially since the 1980s, been the realm of amateurs and non-archaeologists. The aim of this paper is thus in part to (re-)introduce the



Fig. 1. The main areas of rock paintings in Finland (grey areas), with the three largest sites shown.

material to an English-speaking audience. A second, complementary aim is to present a preliminary discussion of certain aspects of its location and iconography in relation to a shamanistic interpretation of the art. Several of the ideas presented in this article have been previously published in Finnish (Lahelma 2001, 2003).

THE SUBJECT MATTER

Finnish rock paintings share many of the characteristic features of North Eurasian hunter-gatherer rock-art, such as the predominance of large cervids, boats and stick-figure humans. There is an apparent lack of complex, narrative scenes: the images are static, sometimes superimposed, and the majority of motifs seem unrelated. In a word, they may be described as 'iconic' (cf. Klassen 1998). Some combinations, usually of two paired images, form interesting exceptions to this rule. The paintings resemble Swedish rock paintings (Janson et. al.

1989, Kivikäs 2003) in many respects, but certain idiosyncrasies give Finnish rock paintings their own character. Unlike in Sweden, the choice of motifs shows no signs of influence from agrarian or 'South Scandinavian' rock art.

Anthropomorphic figures are the most common element of the rock paintings. These are, as a rule, 'stick-figures', usually shown in frontal view (but a small number of human figures seen in profile are known also). The head may be a mere spot, a circle or sometimes a triangle (Fig. 2a). In a few cases there are what appear to be horns added to the head, and sometimes the head seems to have other animal features, such as a snout or a bird-like beak. Hands can be raised in the 'adorant' position, or they may be on the sides. Legs are usually bent from the knees inwards. Primary sexual characteristics normally have not been marked, but there are examples of unambiguous representations of the female sex (in two cases, both at the painting of Astuvansalmi on

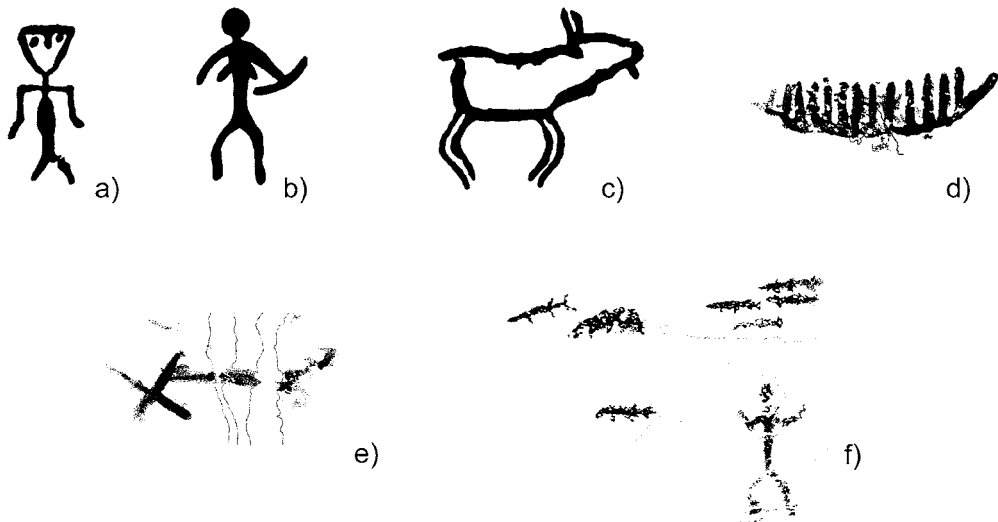


Fig. 2. Figures from Finnish rock paintings: (a) a 'stick-figure' human with a triangular head, Värrikallio; (b) the 'Artemis' of Astuvansalmi; (c) elk figure, Uittamonsalmi; (d) boat figure, Ruominkapia; (e) geometric figures (an oblique cross joined by a horizontal line), Astuvansalmi; (f) a shoal of fish surrounding a human figure, Kapasaari. Tracings by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (a & c), Pekka Sarvas (b), Pekka Kivikäs (d & e) and Timo Miettinen (f).

Lake Yövesi, breasts have been depicted; see Fig. 2b) and somewhat more ambiguous images that may or may not be phallic males. Sometimes the figures have been painted upside down, as if diving, and sometimes they appear to form pairs of two stick figures.

Elks (Fig. 2c) are a second common group, although it is in fact often difficult to be sure whether many of the images depict elks or deer. Some paintings show a degree of realism (e.g. the running elk of Haukkavuori at Lake Konnivesi), but in most cases realism clearly hasn't been the objective. With three or four possible exceptions, horns are never marked, but it is not uncommon for the animals to have prominent beards. They might therefore perhaps be understood as males in their spring attire.

A third common but more problematic group is that which has been interpreted usually as *boats*, but by some writers (in particular Taavitsainen 1978) as *antlers* (Fig. 2d). They are usually curved and bowl-shaped (but sometimes flat) lines with short vertical strokes pointing up. The short strokes, which in a few cases are conical in shape, are normally interpreted as the crew of the boat. The motif seems clearly related to images of ships in the rock arts of Scandinavia and Russian Karelia, where they are generally more readily recognisable as boats. In Finland, the highly schematic shape of the motif often prevents definite recognition. Furthermore, in a few cases the images seem to incorporate elements of two categories: sometimes an elk's head appears to adorn the prow of the 'boat', and sometimes the 'boat' is attached to the forehead of an elk, so as to form the unrealistically huge horns of the animal. In two cases, both of them at Saraakallio, a ship-like figure has both the head *and* legs of an elk, making it impossible to interpret these figures as realistic depictions of boats adorned with sculpted elk heads. This fantastic element is further accentuated by the fact that one of these creatures has two heads. The same kind of ambiguity, and similar fantastic creatures,

can be found also in the rock art of northern Sweden (Bolin 2000).

Other types of images include *hand- and paw-prints* (the latter possibly those of a bear) and in a few instances *fish, birds and snakes*. A number of images show animals other than the ones mentioned above, but these are frequently difficult to identify because of the schematic nature of the paintings and their sometimes poor state of preservation. Various *abstract symbols* have also been pictured (Fig. 2e), such as net-figures and zigzag lines, but their proper recognition often suffers from the same difficulties. Significantly, no certain representations of a bear are known, despite the prevalence of bears in contemporary portable art (Carpelan 1977) and its central position in Finno-Ugric mythology, as recorded in the historical period (Holmberg 1927).

Finally, a significant number of paintings have no recognisable figures whatsoever, only a blurred area of red paint. This problematic group probably includes paintings destroyed by the elements, and some that may be attributable to a natural accumulation of ochre seeping from the rock itself. However, it seems that in some cases a blotch of bright red colour was intentionally painted and never meant to include identifiable figures.

INTERPRETATION

Traditional interpretations given to Finnish rock art include hunting magic (Sarvas 1969) and shamanism (Siikala 1981); a totemistic theory has also been advanced by some writers (e.g. Autio 1995). The shamanistic interpretation, as proposed by the anthropologist Anna-Leena Siikala (1981), was based mainly on ethnographic analogies drawn from the nomadic cultures of the circumpolar north. Siikala connected the phenomenon of making rock art to 'animal ceremonialism', or the idea that a continued supply of a species of animal can be

guaranteed by returning a specific part of a hunted animal to the 'owner' spirit of that species. This 'owner' Siikala identified in the famous 'Artemis' image of Astuvansalmi (Fig. 2b), and the images of elks she interpreted as 'return pictures' in accordance with animal ceremonialism. In her view, rock paintings are to be understood as places where the shaman could contact the 'keeper' of the elk species. Images of birds and fish Siikala interpreted as the shaman's spirit helpers.

Although Siikala's account could perhaps be criticised for relying rather uncritically on Siberian ethnography (an important body of material, but geographically far removed from Finland), it has long been regarded the most convincing attempt to interpret Finnish rock paintings. However, as studies in interpretation have been rare and irrefutable evidence of shamanism lacking, interpretations of Finnish rock art have tended towards a kind of 'compromise theory' that includes elements of all suggested interpretations (e.g. Miettinen 2000:33–45).

I have recently attempted to find fresh strands of evidence in support of the shamanistic interpretation by examining the landscape and location of the sites, by looking at combinations of two or more images (overlooked by Siikala), and by considering a 'neuropsychological' approach to the shamanistic interpretation (Lahelma 2001, 2003). A discussion concerning neuropsychology and shamanism has raged in rock art literature since the year 1988, when David Lewis-Williams and Thomas Dowson first published their theory of a neuropsychological interpretation of rock art (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988; for an updated review of arguments, see Lewis-Williams 2001). As a result, shamanism has become a topic of highly polarized views in archaeological research, with both adherents and critics of shamanistic interpretations sometimes appearing obsessive. Although some of the criticisms (see e.g. Bahn 2001, Helvenston & Bahn 2003) levelled at the

neuropsychological model may be valid, most are not relevant from the point of view of this paper as they tend to centre on problems specific to the study of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, technical details relating to the 'strong' form of the neuropsychological model, or perceived excesses in applying the model. Moreover, many appear to be related to what Whitley and Keyser (2003) identify as an essentially 'defeatist' position to interpretation – a conviction that an archaeology of religion is impossible. Such a position seems fatal not only for rock art research but archaeology in general, for, as Insoll (2004) has recently argued, all material culture is potentially structured by religion.

A second controversy surrounding the concept of shamanism has to do with its definition and applicability (or lack thereof) outside the *locus classicus* of Siberia. Precisely what shamanism is and what the boundaries (geographical or otherwise) of the concept are has been debated for more than a hundred years (Hamayon 2001, Price 2001), and to enter that discussion would create a lengthy and probably pointless digression. The term 'shamanism' can be used in the context of Finnish prehistory simply because, as Price (2001:6) has correctly observed, 'shamanism has always been an externally imposed construction, and does not exist anywhere at all other than in the minds of its students'. Shamanism is thus an academic creation, but even its critics rarely deny its utility in describing certain patterns of religious behaviour and worldview, especially in the circumpolar region. No apologies are, therefore, made for using the term in this paper.

As I will attempt to demonstrate below, irrespective of their successes or failures in interpreting other prehistoric material, shamanism and the neuropsychological model appear to provide a best-fit explanation to many aspects of Finnish rock art that would otherwise be difficult to understand. For reasons of brevity, this discussion is limited

mainly to the presence of therianthropes and 'falling' and 'diving' anthropomorphs. Other examples could be cited, but I prefer to draw attention also to the location of the paintings, which can similarly be examined vis-à-vis trance experiences.

Furthermore, it must be emphasised that Finnish rock art has been quite firmly associated with shamanism well before the recent 'boom' in shamanistic interpretations of rock art. The student of Finnish rock art cannot completely ignore the fact that shamanism is a central element of both Finnish and Saami pre-Christian religion, and indeed is present in some form in the entire area populated by Finno-Ugric peoples, extending well into Siberia.³ Finno-Ugric shamanism also seems to be of considerable antiquity. In historical sources, an accurate description of a Saami shamanistic séance – remarkably similar to those given by 17th and 18th century missionaries – is found already in the 12th century *Historia Norvegiae* (Tolley 1994). Based on historical linguistics and the wide geographical distribution of certain religious practices and elements of myth, historians of religion have argued for a Stone Age antiquity of shamanism among Finno-Ugric peoples (e.g. Siikala 1999). Such speculation should of course be viewed with a healthy dose of scepticism – but it does provide a useful framework for understanding past beliefs.

Archaeological material commonly cited as evidence for prehistoric shamanism in a Finno-Ugric context includes finds from the Mesolithic cemetery of Olenii Ostrov (Zvelebil 1997), Iron Age Permian bronze casts (Spitsyn 1906, Tallgren 1934) and a few finds of Saami shaman drum hammers and pointers from Late Iron Age contexts (e.g. Zachrisson 1991). However, it is in rock art that we find the most convincing archaeological evidence for prehistoric shamanism in northern Eurasia. In Siberia, the making of rock art continued well into historical times, and particularly the more recent panels can be confidently associated with

shamanism (Okladnikov 1972, Hoppál 1998, Devlet 2001). Admittedly, the further back in time we go, the more ambiguous the evidence becomes. It is precisely for this reason that the neuropsychological model – a purely formal method – is embraced here. Where simple ethnographic analogy becomes unreliable, neuropsychology can provide additional evidence for the lack or presence of shamanism in prehistoric art.

IMAGES OF ECSTASY AND TRANCE GEOMETRIC FIGURES

The neuropsychological model, as advocated by Lewis-Williams and others (e.g. Dronfield 1995, 1996, Whitley 2000), makes much use of simple geometric figures (such as zigzag lines, parallel lines, net figures and 'fortifications') known as entoptics, which are taken to indicate the presence of trance imagery. Examples of such imagery are occasionally found also in Finnish rock art, including the paintings Saraakallio, Kotojärvi, Astuvansalmi and Verla (see Kivikäs 1995:54, 211, 214–221, 237). At times, they appear to be manipulated according to the 'principles of perception' and 'three stages of trance-model' discussed by Lewis-Williams and Dowson. Thus for example at Saraakallio we find the zigzag-motif represented alone, combined into boat-figures and, finally, transformed into what look like 'zigzag-limbed' anthropomorphs (Lahelma 2001, Fig. 1). Geometric figures, however, are not very frequent or varied in Finnish rock paintings, and as such their usefulness in interpretation is limited. More fruitful evidence for trance imagery can be found in representational images.

THERIANTHROPIC FIGURES

Therianthropes, or creatures that combine features of both humans and animals, are particularly interesting from the point of view of the shamanistic interpretation of Finnish rock paintings, as some of them are

clearly 'unrealistic' images. In the light of the neuropsychological model, therianthrope figures portray the universal experience of metamorphosis or of a change in one's physical form, associated with deep trance (Chippindale *et al.* 2000). The therianthrope can be seen to portray an intermediate stage in this experience: a change from human to animal (or vice versa) has begun, but has not yet reached its climax.

Therianthropes have sometimes been explained as hunters clad in animal masks (Taavitsainen 1978:116, Kivikäs 2000:68, 80). However, as hunting scenes are never portrayed in Finnish rock paintings, the depiction of masked hunters seems unlikely. Furthermore, some images clearly do not fit into this explanation. Such an image is found for example in the rock painting of Kolmiköytisienvuori at Lake Ruovesi, where

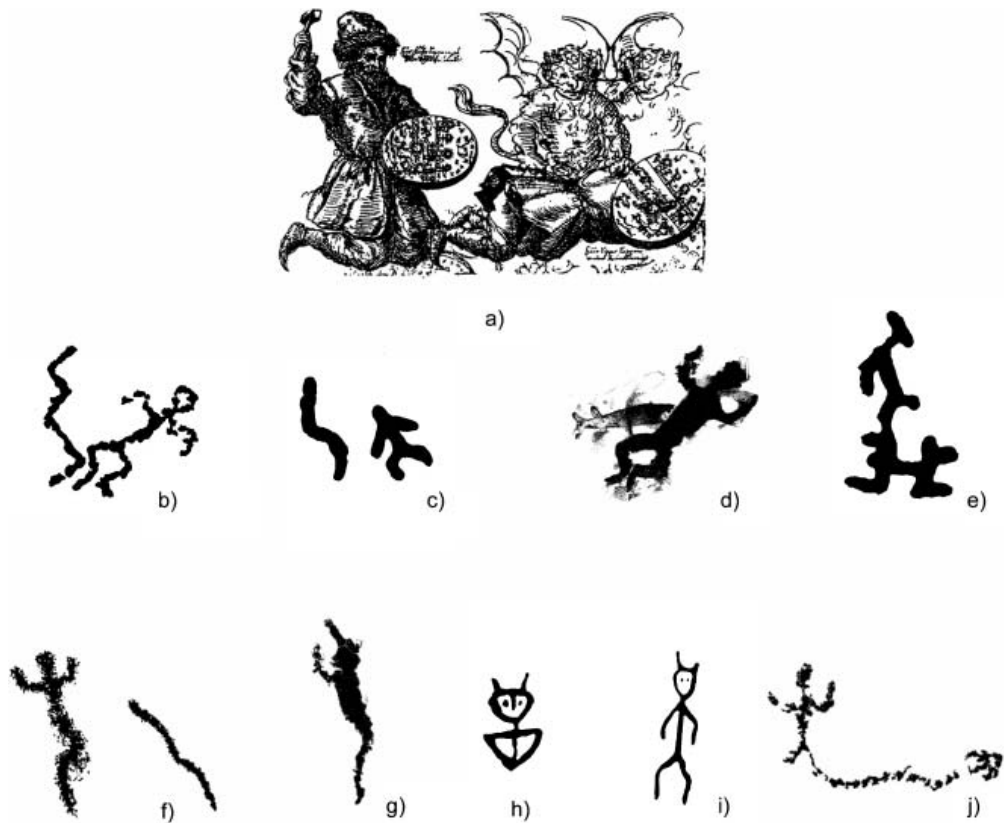


Fig. 3. Trance experiences? (a) A 17th century drawing by Rheen, showing a Saami shaman drumming (on left) and fallen in trance (on right), with his soul escaping his body in the shape of a demon; (b) a 'falling' human juxtaposed with a snake (?), Iitti; (c) a 'falling' human juxtaposed with a snake (?), Enonkoski; (d) a 'falling' human juxtaposed with a fish (pike?), Juusjärvi; (e) a 'fallen' human, from whose head a deer (?) leaps upwards, Väräkallio; (f) a 'snake-bodied' therianthrope juxtaposed with a snake, Kolmiköytisienvuori; (g) an therianthrope with a long snout, Saraakallio; (h) a horned anthropomorph, Uittamonsalmi; (i) a horned anthropomorph, Astuvansalmi; (j) an anthropomorph whose right leg is formed by a long, wriggling line, Voikoski. Tracings by Sinimarja Ojonen (b), Pekka Kivikäs (d & g), Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (c, e, h), Pekka Sarvas (i) and Timo Miettinen (f & j).

an anthropomorphic image has a lower body formed by a wriggling line (Fig. 3f). That this line should be interpreted as representing a snake appears to be confirmed by an anatomically correct image of a snake next to it. A similar 'snake-adorant' seems to be found in the painting of Juusjärvi near Helsinki, where one of the human figures in a group of four adorants has a lower body formed by a zigzag-line. A third example, perhaps also belonging to this group, is a figure from Voikoski, where the right leg of a human stick-figure forms a long, wriggling line (Fig. 3j). These images can best be understood as representing therianthropes that are half human, half snake.

Other types of possible therianthropes can be identified. A figure in the Juusjärvi painting has bird-like features, including a nose resembling a beak and hands lifted up like wings. Among the many images at the important painting site of Saraakallio can be found an anthropomorph with a strange, long snout, resembling perhaps that of a wolf or a dog (Fig. 3g). The most common and best known type belonging to this category are, however, the horned anthropomorphs, which may be found in a number of paintings, including Astuvansalmi, Väräkallio and Verla (Figs. 3h, i). The horns are schematic lines, but without much doubt represent those of an elk, as is evidenced by certain images of elks, for example at Astuvansalmi. At Väräkallio, furthermore, one of the elk figures appears to have the hind legs of a human being. All these images can be interpreted as images of shamanic metamorphosis: of taking the shape of a snake or an elk, possibly also of a bird and a wolf.

'FALLING' HUMANS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ANIMAL

A few rock paintings in Finland show a human figure painted in a 45-degree angle or lying flat, as if falling down. These images are always accompanied by an animal, so that the two images form a clear pair. At

Juusjärvi, the falling human is accompanied by a fish; at Väräkallio by an elk or a deer; and at the paintings of Haukkavuori (Enonkoski) and Mertakallio by a wriggling or zigzagging line, probably representing a snake (Figs. 3b–e).

In Saami shamanism of the historical period, the most dramatic and emblematic event of a shamanistic séance occurred when the shaman (*noaidi*) literally fell on the ground in trance. This starting point of the otherworldly journey was accompanied by the summoning of a spirit helper, which often appeared in the guise of an animal. If therianthropes represent a shaman taking the shape of an animal, then it does not seem far-fetched to understand these combinations of falling figures and animals as representing a shaman falling in trance, accompanied by the summoned spirit helper (cf. Núñez 1995:127, 128).

Turning again to the rock painting of Väräkallio, we find there a scene in which an elk or a deer appears to leap up from the head of a fallen-down human figure (Fig. 3e). This scene may be compared to a drawing (Fig. 3a) of a Saami *noaidi*, made in the 17th century by the Swedish priest Samuel Rheen (d. 1680), an active missionary in Lapland and thoroughly acquainted with Saami culture. The drawing shows the shaman drumming (on left) and fallen in trance (on the right), with his soul escaping his body in the shape of a demon. It is almost as if Rheen and the Stone Age painter of Väräkallio had been describing the same event – each, of course, through their respective interpretative lenses.

ZOOMORPHIC SPIRIT HELPERS IN FINNISH AND SAAMI TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

The use of ethnographic analogies drawn from Saami religion in interpreting rock art is by no means a new idea – in Finnish rock art research, it was first done by Ville Luho in the early 1970s (Luho 1971). However,

today the idea gains increased weight from the wide-ranging consensus among scholars of different fields that the population history of Finland has not seen significant breaks in prehistory (Fogelberg 1999). Both Finns and Saami are believed to descend from the Sub-neolithic Comb Ware populations responsible for making Finnish rock paintings. The pre-Christian religious traditions of both groups can, therefore, potentially contain elements relevant to understanding Finnish rock art. One might even argue that Saami ethnography approaches what Taçon and Chippindale (1998) call an 'informed' method of interpretation.

Certainly, the information concerning spirit helpers in both Saami shamanistic practices and Finnish traditional epic poetry seems highly relevant. Even the animal species appearing in traditions of the historical period seem to be the same as in prehistoric rock art. The most important spirit helpers (*noides-woeigni*) of a Saami shaman in his journey to the otherworld were the deer of the otherworld (*sáiva sarva*), his 'alter ego'; a supernatural fish or snake (*sáiva guelie*), who assisted the shaman in his journeys to the world below; and *sáiva leddie*, a supernatural bird who accompanied him in journeys to the upper world (Bäckman 1975). What is more, these beings were, according to many sources, thought to live in holy mountains (*passevare*). Indeed, in some sources (such as the accounts of 18th century missionaries Jens and Sigvard Kildal) the *sáiva*-prefix attributed to the spirit helpers has been replaced with *passevare* (e.g. *passevare guelie*, 'the fish of the holy mountain'). This seems to offer us a further clue in support of the idea that zoomorphic spirit helpers were portrayed in rock paintings.

The pre-Christian Finnish religious tradition similarly includes references to zoomorphic spirit helpers, especially in relation to the institution of 'wise men' (*tietäjät*) and certain themes of epic folk poetry. The Finnish tradition is historically more stratified, but here, too, it is possible to distinguish

the characteristic spirit helpers of an archaic hunting-and-gathering culture: the elk (or deer) associated with the middle world, the bird associated with the upper world, and the snake (or fish) associated with the lower world (Siikala 2002:234, 235). A good example can be found in the poem *Väinämöinen's trip to Tuonela*, considered by Siikala (2002:302) to be one of the most shamanistic and archaic of all *Kalevala* poetry.⁴ In the poem, the 'eternal sage' Väinämöinen is building a boat but does not have the correct magic words to complete the task. He sets out to Tuonela, the Land of Death, in search of the words and crosses the River of Death in a boat. After failing to acquire the words, he barely escapes the Land of Death by changing himself into a snake in order to swim through the nets in the grim river.

LOCATION

A growing amount of rock art studies approach the art from the point of view of its location in the physical and social landscape (e.g. Sognnes 1994, Bradley 1997, Whitley 1998, Helskog 1999, Nash & Chippindale 2002, Chippindale & Nash 2004). Traditional archaeology has studied the location of sites in the context of an abstract space, in which the small-scale, specific and experiential characteristics of places are lost at the expense of distribution maps and contour lines (Tilley 1994). In doing so, archaeology has lost sight of what prehistoric people may have perceived as the most significant elements of landscape. Numerous ethnographic examples highlight the manner in which, among hunter-gatherers, specific topographic features – such as mountains, boulders, rapids or springs – have acquired mythical and sacred connotations, or have been viewed as living beings. As Ingold (2000) has emphasised, hunter-gatherer societies rarely make a strict distinction between animate and inanimate entities, but various features of the physical

environment can be perceived as ‘persons’ and as potent actors in human-environment relations. Not infrequently, such features are associated with rock art. The most famous and best-documented examples of this come from Aboriginal Australia, but as Bradley (2000:13, 14) notes, in order to understand the role of unaltered natural features in European prehistory, the ethnography of Siberia and Europe’s arctic north is of much more relevance. Peter Jordan’s recent ethno-archaeological research among the Siberian Khanty is a prime example of this (Jordan 2003a).

Well-documented examples of sacred topography can be found in northern Fennoscandia. In an important study, Manker (1957) has given detailed descriptions of more than 500 sacred sites of the Saami. Although here no oral tradition or

cult associating sacred sites with rock art is known to exist, some examples of historical period rock art probably related to the Saami have been found (Shumkin 1990:66, Bayliss-Smith & Mulk 1999, Simonsen 2001:48). In spite of their rarity, these discoveries suggest that the tradition of making rock art survived in some parts of northern Scandinavia until relatively recent times, and that the reasons for making it were forgotten perhaps only some centuries ago.

Finnish landscape is typically flat or hilly, dotted with a great number of lakes that often form extensive systems of labyrinthine waterways. The rock paintings are usually located in some of the most obvious topographic landmarks along these waterways: impressive, light-coloured rocky cliffs rising on lakeshores (Fig. 4). Most are made on outcrops of bedrock, but seven sites are



Fig. 4. The site of Mertavuori in the municipality of Iitti is in many ways typical of Finnish rock paintings: a bare rock cliff rising on a lakeshore. Seen from certain viewpoints, the shapes of the rock are strongly reminiscent of a human face in profile (see Taavitsainen 1981, Fig. 3). Photo: Antti Lahelma.

located on large boulders. A few are associated with rapids, and some are inside or nearby small cavities. As the cliffs with paintings are bare of the all-encompassing forest vegetation, they are usually well visible from afar to anyone travelling by water. Aside from being nearly always directly at water's edge, locations of the rocks vary. Frequently, they are situated in narrow straits in a lake or between two lakes, but a location in an island, a peninsula or the end of a small bay is not uncommon. Some sites lie in almost 'hidden' locations, far from any obvious water or land routes.

This association with water has usually been explained in functional terms, mainly as being somehow connected to strategies of hunting elk (Taavitsainen 1978, Siikala 1981:89–91). However, as this explanation fails to account for many of the recurring aspects of rock painting location, alternative – or rather, complementary – 'symbolic' explanations must be sought. Here it is interesting to note the apparent anthropomorphic features of some of the painted rocks. Many modern observers have been powerfully struck by the human likeness of the natural features of certain rock painting sites (Taavitsainen 1981, Kivikäs 1995:51, 260, Miettinen 2000:86, 87, Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003). Examples include the paintings of Mertavuori, Valkeisaari, Ilmuksenvuori, Astuvansalmi and Lakiasuonvuori. Such observations are, of course, highly problematic in that it is impossible for us to know if Stone Age hunter-gatherers recognised such features also. Some validity to this phenomenon is, however, given by ethnographic information relating to cults associated with distinctly shaped stones in northern Eurasia. The Saami cult of the *sieidi*, or rock formations⁵ worshipped as expressing a supernatural power, is of particular relevance here. In the 1930s, a Finnish ethnographer, Samuli Paulaharju, wrote of the Saami attitude towards *sieidi*:

Only peculiar, unusually large or strange cliffs, stone pillars or boulders attracted [the Saami's]

attention. The lonesome, imposing pillar on a barren slope of a fell, a lone boulder on a heath or a huge block standing alone by a lake, a strange rock with a hole in a rapid, an ugly, water-worn bench of rock – these were surely so odd that they concealed some secret power, to which one could turn to. A white block of rock visible from afar was considered more wondrous than others and well deserved to be worshipped. A great power could also live in a brown outcrop of rock, the worn shape of which resembled that of a human face or of an animal. Equally well, such power might be present in rocks that in their entirety reminded one of a human being, or rested on their foundations like a large tent of the Lapps (Paulaharju 1932:5, 6; my translation).

The site of the *sieidi*, and sometimes its entire surroundings such as a particular fell or lake on which it stood, were considered sacred (*passe*). The *sieidi* were thought to be able to bestow hunting or fishing luck or, if ignored or offended, deprive the hunter of his catch. Small sacrificial offerings such as coins, reindeer antlers or fish heads were given to the *sieidi* and their 'faces' were smeared with the fat or blood of a hunted animal. In addition to being the focus of a sacrificial cult, Paulaharju (1932:16) mentions that the 'great Lapp witches of old' had sung *joiks*⁶ at a *sieidi* and fallen into trance in order to summon game animals.

Although the locations of many of the *sieidi* known to us are somewhat incongruent with rock paintings, the phenomenological similarities between the two are considerable, as pointed out already by Taavitsainen (1981). Mircea Eliade, the Romanian-born historian of religion, has argued that people in pre-industrial societies experience breaks in the homogeneity of space – places that are qualitatively different from the surrounding space and hence regarded sacred (Eliade 1987). The sacred, according to Eliade, manifests in 'hierophanies', such as anomalous and unusual aspects of the landscape. The universalising theories and sweeping generalizations characteristic of Eliade's work find few uncritical supporters in

today's academia, but the concept of hierophany does appear to have definite utility. Certainly in the case of both the Finnish rock paintings and the Saami *sieidi* a pattern of anomalous topography is obvious. Natural landmarks, outstanding formations of landscape, anthropomorphic shapes of the rock, rapids and semi-caves – these are all excellent examples of natural anomalies.

Okladnikov (1972:41) has passed to us a fascinating fragment of information concerning the making of rock art among the Siberian Evenks. He describes hunting rites held each year at a *bugady*, a sacred rock or tree, in association with which Evenk shamans drew red ochre paintings the rock. These *bugady* commonly were of a zoomorphic shape, resembling the head an elk head, and were believed to be inhabited by an elk deity who could bestow hunting luck. Thus, just as with the Saami, we see an association with shamans and sacred, distinctly shaped rocks – but what is more, here the making of red ochre rock paintings is also present.

PICTURES IN BETWEEN THE WORLDS

Knut Helskog has discussed the ‘shore connection’ of rock carvings in Northern Europe and its relevance to our attempts to understand their meaning, emphasising that as the carvings are associated with water, ‘water should therefore be part of the explanation’ (Helskog 1999:74). The same is true of most North European rock paintings. In Finland, it is not uncommon that at a rock painting site, the most imposing rock formations can be found on dry land some tens of metres away from the lakeshore, but the paintings have been made on more humble rocks immediately at water's front. It seems, then, that the most crucial element in rock painting location is not the size or visibility of the rock, but its physical connectedness with water. The setting for rock paintings is carefully selected: they are situated on the *limes* of a symbolic vertical

axis, formed by the rock (sometimes tens of metres high) that reaches towards the sky and the deep, dark water reaching down below. They lie in the point where three elements meet: earth, water and sky (Fig. 5).

This seems to recall the conception of a ‘world mountain’ that unites the different levels of cosmos, common among Finno-Ugric and Altaic peoples (Holmberg 1927). As is well known, a characteristic feature of shamanistic cosmology is a tiered conception of the universe, which in the circumpolar region is commonly divided in three levels. This vertical division of the cosmos is commonly shown in Saami shaman drums – a famous example, Manker's (1938) catalogue number 43, comes from Finnish Lapland. The middle world is inhabited by human beings, while the upper and lower worlds are the abode of gods and spirits. These three levels of cosmos are connected by a vertical *axis mundi*, through which the shaman can move between ordinary and supranormal reality. The *axis mundi* is typically imagined as a tree, mountain or pillar, but among the nomadic peoples of northern Eurasia, the lower world is commonly accessed also through water. The Saami, for example, believed that certain lakes were *sáiva*-lakes, through the bottom of which the lower world could be reached (Pentikäinen 1995:146–149).

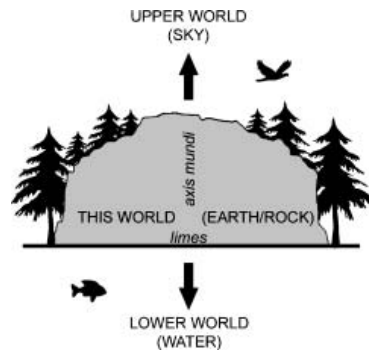


Fig. 5. The rock painting site as a reflection of the cosmic order.

This interpretation of Finnish rock painting sites being symbolic of the *axis mundi* and of the world mountain may find additional support from neuropsychological research concerning altered states of consciousness (ASC). An ASC involves not only visual hallucinations, but certain somatic experiences and shared sensations also derive from the central nervous system and consequently have a universal character (see Chippindale et. al. 2000:72–74). Among the most common somatic phenomena associated

with ASC are experiences of weightlessness, breathlessness and the mental perception of departing from the physical body. Interpretations given to these experiences are culturally determined, but are almost universally described as being akin to flying and diving, and are in shamanistic traditions usually interpreted as such. That such experiences can have inspired some of the paintings is suggested by the occasional human figures that are painted upside-down, as if diving into the lake below the



Fig. 6. The rock painting of Hahlavuori in the municipality of Hirvensalmi. Note the 'diving' anthropomorph with an arrow-shaped head in the middle. Tracing by Pekka Kivikäs (2000).

painting (Fig. 6). Images of fish (or of snakes), particularly when accompanied by a ‘falling’ human (Fig. 3d), may similarly relate to experiences of diving to the lower world. An interesting and highly suggestive scene related to this theme can be found in the rock painting of Kapasaari (Fig. 2e). The painting shows a human figure accompanied by a shoal of fish, possibly portraying the subaquatic experience of trance. Viewed together, these three scenes can be thought of as a sequence, showing the shaman (1) falling into trance (accompanied by a fish-shaped spirit helper), (2) diving to the watery underworld, and (3) swimming under water. One is reminded of the subaquatic trance journey described in the 12th century account of *Historia Norvegiae* (Tolley 1994), mentioned earlier.

Finally, images of birds, rare though they are, might be understood as portraying bird-shaped spirit helpers and thus referring to journeys to the upper world. At three sites (Värikallio, Pakanavuori and Juusjärvi; Kivikäs 2000:28, 29, 68, 69), we find enigmatic series of figures showing both men and animals, arranged in rows that seem to be rising upwards. It would be tempting to see these as portraying celestial journeys, but the poor preservation of the figures makes the interpretation shaky at best. Admittedly, this kind of imagery seems more difficult to find than images seemingly describing journeys to the world below. Here it should be mentioned that while the Saami certainly believed in the existence of an upper world, the trance journeys of the *noaidi* appear to have been limited to the underworld (Kasten 1989:119). This, of course, need not have been true of the Stone Age makers of rock paintings – but if it was, it might explain the small number of images (such as birds) that can be associated with heavenly journeys.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarise the argument presented above, the Finnish rock paintings can be

interpreted as an expression of a shamanistic system of beliefs. Their iconography appears to reflect experiences of falling into trance, of summoning spirit helpers, of changing one’s physical form, and of journeying to the Otherworld. The elk, we may suggest, is pictured not as prey but as a spirit helper or a soul animal of special importance – perhaps not altogether unlike the *sáiva sarva* of the Saami shaman. As Layton (2000:181–182) has argued, in the context of shamanistic art, the animal species portrayed with the highest frequency is likely to represent such a being – a species particularly charged with power.

Furthermore, it is suggested that shamanistic ideas and cosmology are reflected not only in iconography of the paintings, but also in their location in the landscape, which in many respects resembles that of a Saami sacred site (*sieidi*). The most common type of rock painting site, an imposing rocky precipice rising on the lakeshore, can be seen to reflect aspirations of accessing both the upper world (by climbing or flying up the rock) and the lower world (by diving down to the bottom of a lake), through a symbolic axis (world mountain). To use Eliade’s (1987) terminology, the rock painting site emerges as an *imago mundi* – a reflection of the cosmic order.

On the basis of the present discussion, it would certainly be premature to attribute *all* of Finnish rock art to shamanism and trance experiences, especially as several important categories of motifs (such as boat figures) were left outside of the discussion. While shamanism seems to provide answers to many aspects of Finnish rock art, there can have been several different reasons for painting images, and some sites can have served different purposes than others. More research is needed to address these issues.

In the preceding paragraphs, the importance of the shoreline to any attempt at understanding Finnish rock paintings was emphasised. Here it would seem, however, that problems arise with the assertion as soon we broaden our view to include the

rock paintings of Northern Sweden. The pattern of location of the Swedish rock paintings seems to be more varied than in Finland, including a few sites (most famously Flatruet in Härjedalen) that have no connection to water whatsoever (Janson *et al.* 1989, Kivikäs 2003). These sites are otherwise so similar to Finnish rock paintings that it would be disingenuous to ignore them simply because they lie on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia and the Swedish–Finnish national frontier. How, then, does one accommodate Flatruet with the ‘shore connection’ (Helskog 1999) of North European hunter-gatherer rock art?

Perhaps the answer can, again, be sought by way of an analogy with the Saami *sieidi*. Three types of *sieidi* are distinguished in the ethnographic record: fish, deer and reindeer *sieidi*, providing livelihood for fishermen, hunters and reindeer herders respectively. This economic association is reflected in their location. Fish *sieidi*, considered by Hultkrantz (1985:25–26) the most ancient type, are always located along the fishing waters, whereas deer and reindeer *sieidi* lie along the migratory paths of the animals, often up in the mountains. If this economic logic is transferred to prehistoric rock paintings, it seems only natural that in the Finnish Lake Region (rich in aquatic resources) paintings are associated with fishing waters, while in the inland regions of Swedish Norrland (home to large herds of game animals) they can also be found up in the mountains. But in neither case is the location dictated by economic factors alone. Thus, just as the Finnish sites are located at the *limes* of water and earth, the site of Flatruet lies at the threshold between two different kinds of territories, the forest plain and the open mountain area (Lars Forsberg, personal communication). ‘Functional’ and ‘symbolic’ reasons appear to intertwine in determining the location of rock paintings – an observation that holds true with the Saami *sieidi* also. As Brück (1999) has convincingly argued, we cannot expect to

find a dichotomy of ritual and practical activity in prehistoric societies. The key to rock painting location is therefore not simply the shoreline or ‘liminality’, but appears to be found in the close coinciding of anomalous or liminal places with places important from the point of view of economic exploitation. Like the *sieidi*, such sites were the foci of rituals and worship, but were also intimately involved in the practicalities of daily life, particularly with food production.

Any study of prehistoric rock art that makes use of ethnographic analogy should be careful not to view the peoples described in ethnographic records as lacking history. In response to this, Peter Jordan (2003b) urges archaeologists to engage with the specificity of particular archaeological datasets. In using ethnographic analogy, we should have an eye for differences as well as similarities – that is, instead of assuming that nothing has changed, we should look for what *has* changed and *how*. That Saami religion has undergone a number of changes during the historical period is a well-established fact (Hultkrantz 1985, Kasten 1989), and it is likely to have done so in prehistory also. Even if one accepts the hypothesis that the stone *sieidi* and prehistoric rock paintings are related, at least three glaring differences are immediately obvious to anyone comparing the two. The first and most obvious is the use of paint: the *sieidi* are unaltered natural places (Bradley 2000), whereas rock painting sites have been marked with man-made, painted symbols. Second, many of the *sieidi* are large or medium-sized boulders, while most of the paintings have been made on outcrops of bedrock. And third, nearly all rock paintings are associated with water, whereas the *sieidi* can be located in a wide variety of places, not always associated with the shoreline (Manker 1957). It would clearly be a mistake, then, to maintain that rock paintings and the *sieidi* had identical functions.

This being said, the striking similarities between the two phenomena are difficult to

ignore. In fact, many aspects of rock art seem to find such close parallels in Saami ethnography that the prospect of a 'direct historical analogy' in interpreting North European hunter-gatherer rock art should be taken seriously – a point raised also by Jordan (2003b) and Zvelebil (1997) while discussing Siberian ethnography. In particular, there can be little doubt that this material is highly relevant to our understanding of Finnish rock paintings. The challenge lies in developing commonly accepted and theoretically well-informed guidelines on how ethnographic analogy should be used.

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NOTES

¹ Because of highly varying levels of documentation, it is difficult to give an exact number. If all reports of possible prehistoric rock paintings in Finland are counted together, the number is 130 at the time of writing (21 January 2005). Of these, at least four but possibly as many as 15 are likely to be either fabrications or natural accumulations of red ochre, and many more are probably genuine rock paintings but have no identifiable figures. The number of paintings with clearly identifiable figures, unquestionably of prehistoric date, is 89.

² A carving was found in 1935 at Marraskoski rapids in northern Finland. The site has subsequently been destroyed and its age remains unknown. Judging by the photographs and tracings (see Taskinen 2000, Fig. 3), it did not resemble any known prehistoric carvings and may thus have been from the historical period. A second 'carving' from Hiidenvuori in central Finland, reported some years ago by Haarmann (1996) in a well-known journal, was in fact a natural rock formation (Miettinen 1999).

³ The Finnish scholar M. A. Castrén identified shamanism in traditional Finnish folk poetry as early as the mid-19th century (Castrén 1853). Siikala 2002 is a comprehensive, well-argued treatise on the presence of shamanistic elements in pre-Christian Finnish religion. Unfortunately, many other central works on the subject have not been translated into English, but see e.g. Pentikäinen 1999 on Finnish mythology, Bäckman & Hultkrantz 1978 on Saami shamanism and Holmberg's (1927) old but still very useful work on Finno-Ugric religions in general.

⁴ The Finnish national epic *Kalevala* is a work of 19th century romanticism, composed by the district physician and humanist Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) in imitation of Homeric epics and *The Poems of Ossian*. The *runes* of the epic are based on traditional Finnish oral poetry, collected by Lönnrot and others during the early 19th century, but are published in a rather heavily edited form. *Väänämöinen's trip to Tuonela* forms a part of the XVI rune of the *Kalevala*. In their original form, the folk poems that lie behind it may be found in English translation in *Finnish Folk Poetry: Epic* (Kuusi *et al.* 1977).

⁵ Historical accounts speak of wooden *sieidi* also, but although wooden 'idols' were undoubtedly worshipped by the Saami, it is unclear if the Saami in fact called them *sieidi* or not (Manker 1957:303).

⁶ A *joik* is an improvised Saami song, but one that is distinguished from the Western notion of singing in a number of ways. As a consequence, the term cannot be properly translated. At best, it might be characterised as a kind of shamanistic chanting, but this, too, is a wholly inadequate definition.

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PAPER II



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EXCAVATING ART: A 'RITUAL DEPOSIT' ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROCK PAINTING OF VALKEISAARI, EASTERN FINLAND

ABSTRACT

The rock painting of Valkeisaari is located on a lakeshore cliff of a small island on Lake Saimaa, eastern Finland. In the 1960s, a number of finds – fragments of pottery, some flints and an 'anthropomorphic' stone – were made from a narrow, sandy terrace in front of the painting. In order to clarify the nature of this unusual discovery, excavations were carried out in 2005 at the spot of the pottery finds. Remains of a fireplace, carbonized seeds of edible plants and a strongly stained cultural layer testified to an intensive and long-standing human presence on the terrace. Finds consisted mainly of broken or whole quartz implements. The site, dated to the Early Metal Period (and possibly later), is interpreted as a ritual deposit connected to the rock painting. The rituals seem to have involved the preparation, consumption and sharing of food. A close ethnographic parallel can be found in the sacrificial meals arranged at the *sieidi* – sacred stones and cliffs worshipped by the Saami of northern Finland.

Keywords: Rock art, ritual, anthropomorphism, Finland, Saami

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INTRODUCTION

As recently as mid-1990s, the American archaeologist Lawrence Loendorf (1994) felt compelled to call for the use of traditional archaeological methods in the study of prehistoric rock art. According to Loendorf, trained archaeologists (especially in North America) have shown a remarkable lack of attention to rock art, leading to a situation where rock art research is dominated by amateurs and non-archaeologists. While these have certainly made considerable contributions to the study of rock art, they have not been trained in (and, at least in the Nordic countries, are not allowed to use) certain basic archaeological methods, such as excavation or soil geochemical analysis. Similar concerns were raised in North America already by Julian Steward in the 1930s (Steward 1937). There appears to be much-delayed need to develop more 'archaeological' approaches to the study of rock art (Taçon & Chippindale 1998).¹

North European rock art has perhaps received more attention from trained archaeologists than its American counterpart (see e.g. Nordbladh 1995; Goldhahn 2006), but some of the problems here remain quite similar. It is surprising to find that in spite of the fact that scientific rock art research first developed in Scandinavia in the course of the 19th century (Bahn 1998), archaeological excavations at Scandinavian rock art sites have been very few and far between. Given the fact that questions of chronology and the 'meaning' of the art – two aspects of the art quite possibly reflected in material (or 'ritual') remains found at the sites – have been central issues throughout the two-century long history of research, excavations would seem to have been an obvious method to be used. Indeed, already the 'father' of rock art research, the Swede Axel Emanuel Holmberg (1848: 10) conducted excavations (of a sort) to settle questions related to rock art, and a few sporadic investigations have been carried out also by later Nordic researchers (e.g. Hallström 1960: 121;

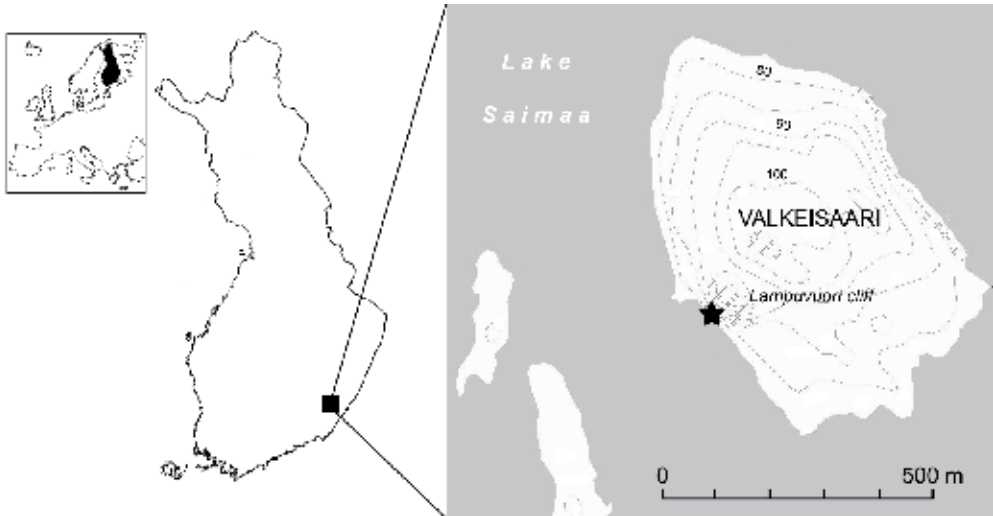


Fig. 1. The location of the island of Valkeisaari on Lake Saimaa and the painted cliff of Lampuvuori (Finnish YKJ-grid coordinates for the excavated area are p: 6782 510–514, i: 3549 228–232, z: 78.90–79.30 m a.s.l., and for the Valkeisaari A rock painting p: 3549 212, i: 6782 539, z: 86,75–87,02 m a.s.l.).

Sarvas 1969: 28–9; Johansen 1979; Taavitsainen 1981: 12; Helskog 1988: 42, 51). Nonetheless, such studies have by and large remained in the footnotes and margins of Nordic rock art research. As a method of enquiry into the meaning of rock art – and especially that associated with hunter-gatherers – archaeological excavations have come to play a significant role only in the late 1990s (Bengtsson 2004a; Lindgren 2004: 46–58; Goldhahn 2006: 91–4).

Before the excavations of the rock painting site of Valkeisaari in eastern Finland – the subject of this paper – only two Finnish rock art sites had yielded any signs of prehistoric activities under excavation. At the large painting of Astuvansalmi excavations have been carried out both on dry land and under water. The former, conducted already in the late 1960s, yielded two stone arrow points: a Late Neolithic slate point and a broken fragment of an Early Metal Period quartz point. No excavation report was written of this investigation, but the finds were published together with the paintings by Sarvas (1969). More recently, four amber pendants (three of them anthropomorphic in shape), a piece of antler and a fragment of mammalian bone were found in Juhani Grönhagen's underwater excavations in

front of the same painting (Grönhagen 1994). The second excavated site in Finland to have yielded finds probably of a prehistoric date is that of Kalamaniemi II in Luumäki, eastern Finland, where some traces of fire, a few pieces of burnt bone, flint and quartz were found (Luoto 1999). In addition to the excavated finds, a number of finds from rock art sites have seen light without proper excavations (see Table 1). The most notable of these are the unburnt bones of elks and water-birds found in an underwater test-pit made at the painting of Kotojärvi (Ojonen 1973). A fragment of a straight-based (Early Metal Period?) arrow point from the important painting of Saraakallio should also be mentioned. However, due to a lack of radiocarbon dates, only some of these finds can be securely associated with the paintings.

As mentioned above, archaeologists in Norway and Sweden have recently begun to show a new interest in excavating hunter-gatherer rock art sites. From the point of view of Finnish rock art, the most interesting results have been those made at the near-identical rock paintings of northern Sweden. For example, the 2003 excavations at the site of Flatruet in Härjedalen yielded three even-based stone arrow points (typologically dated to

Table 1. Finds (both excavated and stray) associated with Finnish rock painting sites, stored in the collections of the Finnish National Museum (NM). The table reflects the situation in late 2006 according to the data collected by the author.

Site	Description	Find number(s)	
Iitti Kotojärvi	Elk bones	NM 18428: 2-4, 6-7, 10	
	Bones of water-birds	NM 18428: 7-8, 10	
	Iron ore	NM 18428: 9	
Laukaa Saraakallio	A fragment of a straight-based arrow point (porphyrite?)	NM 21774	
	Flint (gun- or tinderflint?)	NM 27906	
Lemi Venäinniemi	A quartz item and flakes	NM 34514:1-2	
	Quartz fragments (of uncertain provenance)	NM 35465: 1-4	
Luumäki Kalamaniemi 2	Flint-and quartz flakes, burnt bone, charcoal	NM 31547:1-7	
	Puumala Syrjäsalmi	A quartz core and flakes (uncertain)	NM 25736: 1-2
Ristiina Astuvansalmi	Slate arrow point	NM 17636: 1	
	Straight-based quartz arrow point (fragment)	NM 17636: 2	
	Anthropomorphic amber pendant	NM 25771	
	Anthropomorphic amber pendant	NM 26331: 1	
	Anthropomorphic amber pendant	NM 26331: 2	
	Fragment of an amber object	NM 27146	
	Anthropomorphic sandstone object	NM 26331: 3	
	Fragment of deer antler (worked)	NM 26331:5	
	Mammalian bone (one fragment)	NM 26331:4	
	Taipalsaari Valkeisaari	Textile Ware pottery sherds (12 pieces, ca. 2/3 of a vessel)	NM 17040: 1
		Anthropomorphic pebble	NM 17040: 2
Fragment of a flint object and two flakes		NM 17040: 3	
The finds of the 2005 excavations (quartz items and flakes, pottery, bones)		NM 35202: 1-85	

ca. 1500 BC) which, according to the excavator, appear to have been shot at the painting (Hansson 2006). The excavations also unearthed signs of fires kept at the foot of the painting, with radiocarbon dates extending from ca. 4000 BC to 1200 AD. Fires were found associated also with the paintings of Höggerget I and III in Ångermanland, excavated between 2001 and 2003 (Lindgren 2004: 50–3). Of these, the latter – where a fireplace was found inside a ‘cave’ formed by large boulders – is perhaps more interesting. The four radiocarbon datings made of the fireplace indicate that it had been used during at least two different periods, ca. 4000–4300 cal. BC and 1400–1000 cal. BC (Holmblad 2005).

In Norway, the first investigations of this kind were carried out at the painted cave of Solsemhula already in 1914, with finds of bone and different kinds of items dating to the Early Metal Period, possibly indicating ritual activities (Sognnes 1982). More recently, good results have been achieved at the important Mesolithic carving site of Vingen, where excavations have helped to

clarify questions of chronology, pecking technique and the ‘ideology’ behind the art (Løddøen 2003). However, more relevant from the point of view of this paper are finds associated with Norwegian rock paintings, and especially those made at the site of Rukksesbåkti in Finnmark, found in 1996 (Hebba Helberg 2004; Schanche 2004). The excavations, carried out in 2003, produced lithic material of quartz and chert and several consecutive layers of ashy soil. Samples of carbonized wood extracted from the soil were radiocarbon-dated between the 3rd millennium cal. BC and 15th century cal. AD (Hebba Helberg 2004: 6).

Russian archaeologists have arguably been more active than their Scandinavian colleagues in investigating sites associated with rock art. Excavations at the Karelian rock art sites of Lake Onega and the mouth of River Vyg include those conducted by Zemlyakov (1936), Bryusov (1940: 276-84) and Savvateyev (1977), to name but a few important studies (for a review of research history and results, see Savvateyev 1988). Of particular interest is the site of Zalavrug II at

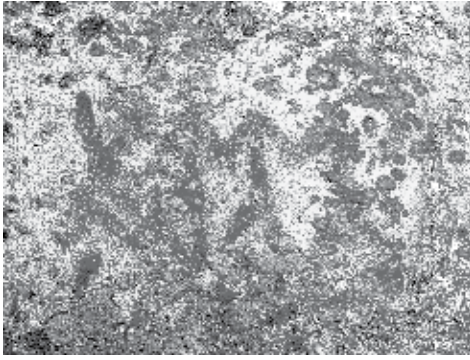


Fig. 2. A retouched photograph of the Valkeisaari A painting. The painting found in 1966 is generally thought to represent a boat (ca. 43 cm wide and 30 cm high) with an elk-head sculpture in the prow and a crew consisting of four 'arrow-shaped' or headless anthropomorphs. Today, the image is faint, partially covered by lichen and difficult to interpret. In this illustration, the painting has been made more distinct by adjusting the hue and saturation of red colours in the photograph. Photo and photographic manipulation: Antti Lahelma.

River Vyg, where an enigmatic stone structure yielded spectacular finds of amber (68 items) and finely crafted arrow points (40 items), as well as Subneolithic pottery and other kinds of find material (Savvateyev 1977: 276-84). Finally, it should be mentioned that excavations at the rock painting sites of the Urals in Russia have occasionally also yielded prehistoric finds. For example, at the site of Pisanech on River Neiva bone arrow points, stone tools and bones of elk and bear were found deposited in ashy layers at the foot of the painting (Shirokov et al. 2000: 7). Although these sites lie geographically far away from Finland, their possible Finno-Ugric connection makes them relevant to the study of Finnish rock art.

In spite of the small number of excavations carried out so far, some recurring patterns are beginning to emerge from the results thus obtained. For example, the presence of signs of fire is a phenomenon found at several rock painting sites ranging from northern Norway to Sweden, Finland and as far as the Ural mountains. Similar, probably ritual use of fire has been observed also

in the case of the agrarian rock carvings of southern Scandinavia (Bengtsson 2004b; Mandt & Lødøen 2006: 202-4). Moreover, finds of arrow points – some of them broken – at rock painting sites also appears to be a phenomenon repeated at several sites over a very large area. Such commonalities in the ritual use of rock art may find parallels in the rich ethnographic literature on North Eurasian hunter-gatherers. However, in order to substantiate these patterns and to reach a more nuanced view of the phenomena associated with rock art, more excavations are urgently needed.

The unusual finds of Valkeisaari

Valkeisaari is a small, rocky island (size ca. 800 x 500 m) on Lake Saimaa, located some 18 km west of the town of Lappeenranta (Fig. 1). A small rock painting consisting of a single boat figure (Fig. 2) and some fragments of painting was found on a lakeshore cliff of the island in 1966 (Luho 1968b, Kivikäs 1995: 149-51). The painting was found by a local amateur archaeologist, Keijo Koistinen, who then proceeded to investigate the surroundings of the painting, inspired by a conviction that there 'must' also be an accompanying sacrificial site. His luck had not run out: some thirty-five meters south-east of the painting he dug under a large flat slab lying on a narrow sandy terrace on the lakeshore, and found a concentration of pottery sherds, two flint flakes and a fragment of a flint item (NM 17040). All the finds were associated with a layer of dark, sooty soil. Koistinen referred to the flat slab (size 1.80 x 1.20 m, height 0.47 m) as a "sacrificial table" (Fig. 3). For convenience, the term is retained here, even though there is no evidence that the stone in fact played any role in a cult associated with rock paintings. It may have, but there is little evidence to support such an assumption.

Koistinen informed the local museum of his finds and the site was soon inspected by archaeologists – first by Matti Huurre (1966) and a year later by Ville Luho (1968a), who also proceeded to write an article of the painting and the finds associated with it (Luho 1968b). All the Valkeisaari sherds belong to a single vessel, approximately a half of which was recovered (Luho 1968b: 37). The pot has a flat base, is decorated around the neck with a pattern formed by comb-



Fig. 3. A photograph taken by archaeologist Matti Huurre of the 'sacrificial table' and the site of the pottery finds in 1966, a short time after they had been found. The soil under the flat slab still appears to bear marks of Keijo Koistinen's 'private dig'. Photo: Matti Huurre/Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

stamps and pits, and has according to Luho been ca. 16 cm high. The undecorated lower part is covered with a textile impression. According to Lavento (2001: 244), the vessel represents Textile Ware, even though it is not one of the most typical representatives of its kind. Luho (1968b: 38) dated the pottery finds of Valkeisaari on ty-

pological grounds to the Late Neolithic or Early Metal Period. The three finds of flint consist of a so-called eastern carbonic flint – a type of stone that isn't naturally found in Finland. One of the pieces bears clear marks of retouching and is therefore a fragment of an object. In addition to the finds of pottery and flint, a small natural rock

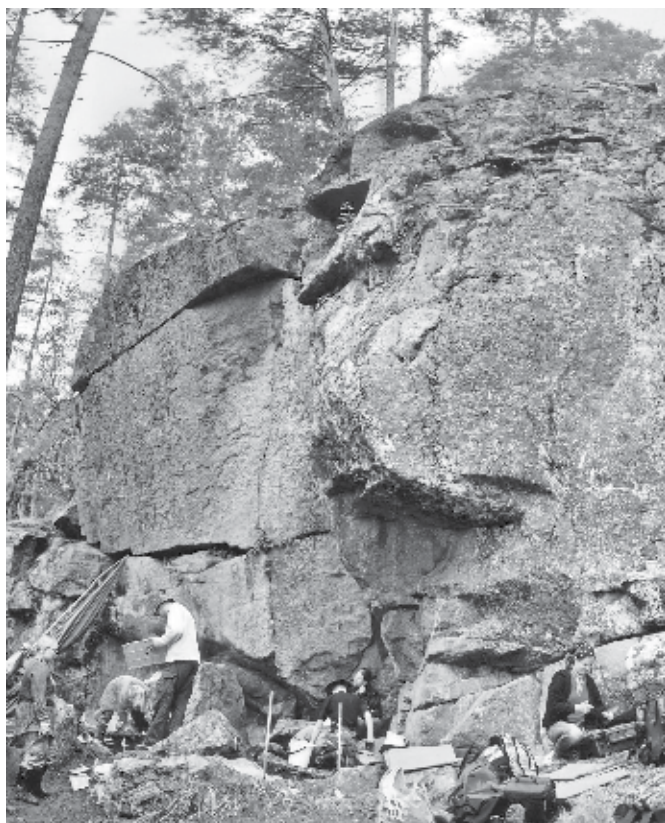


Fig. 4. Excavations in progress on the Valkeisaari terrace in August 2005. Note the 'anthropomorphic' rock formation in the upper part of the image. Photo: Petri Halinen.

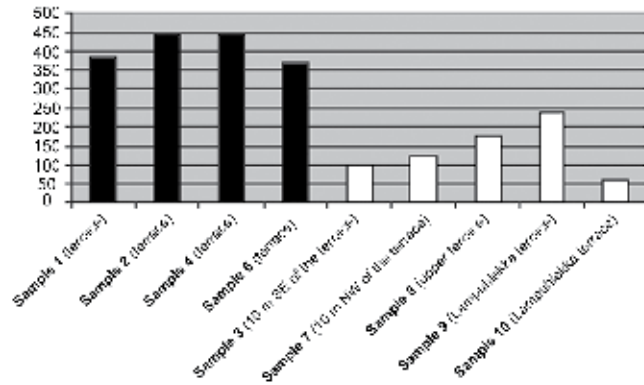
pebble vaguely reminiscent of a human face was collected in 1966. To this intriguing find I shall return below.

Strangely enough, while investigating the 'sacificial site' Koistinen apparently did not notice a second painted area (Valkeisaari B) located directly above the site of the pottery finds. At any rate, it is not mentioned in the research reports of the 1960s. This painting is located at a much lower level – less than five meters above the modern level of Lake Saimaa – than the painting found by Koistinen. It appears to have been found only in the 1970s, when it is mentioned in a survey report (Miettinen 1975, site 13). The painted area is an irregular shape of red colour, ca. 2.2 m wide and 2.3 m high. No distinct images can be discerned in the painting, which has been regarded an uncertain painting (e.g. Kivikäs 1995: 151). There is, however, little reason to doubt that the coloured area is indeed a man-made painting, as

the layer of colour is thick and covers the quartz and feldspar crystals of the rock. Moreover, as Kivikäs (1995: 151) notes, two intensively red areas of paint may well be remains of a pair of hand-prints. Similar pairs of hand-prints have been found for example at the painting of Saraakallio (cf. Kivikäs 1995: 218).

The finds of Valkeisaari are unique in Finland and find only a few parallels in Northern Europe. Pottery has not been found at any other rock painting site in Finland, nor have clear traces of a cultural layer been observed at any other Finnish site, which typically fall directly into water. However, the precise nature and context of these finds has remained rather unclear. Already Ville Luho noted in his inspection report that the site of the pottery finds should be excavated in order to settle the question of its relation to the rock painting (Luho 1968a). A few years later, he mentions in passing that the archaeologist Pekka Sarvas 'has

Fig. 5. Results of the phosphate analysis made at Valkeisaari. Black columns represent phosphate levels (P mg/kg) in soil samples taken from the excavated lower terrace (cf. fig. 6). White columns denote control samples taken e.g. from the sandy terrace of Lampuhiekka ca. 50 m WNW from the site. The result of the contaminated sample no. 5 has been omitted.



investigated the “sacrificial site” in the year 1970’ (Luhio 1971: 7). Unfortunately, no research report exists concerning this investigation either, and Sarvas himself no longer remembers any details (pers. comm. 14.4.2005). However, it seems that nothing of interest was found.

Although the Valkeisaari finds are commonly associated with the painting and its possible ritual use, it has not been possible to rule out alternative explanations. As up until now the site had not been excavated, it could equally well be maintained that the finds have originated from a later dwelling site completely unrelated to the rock painting (Jussila 1999: 128). In order to clarify this question, a small-scale excavation was arranged by the author at Valkeisaari in August 2005 (Lahelma 2005a).

THE 2005 EXCAVATIONS

In order to pinpoint possible areas of human activity on the Valkeisaari terrace, the research project of 2005 was begun with a soil geochemical analysis. Although routinely used in excavations of prehistoric dwelling sites, this investigation was the first of its kind at a Finnish rock painting site. Ten soil samples were taken from the terrace in front of the paintings and its surroundings. The results were promising: the high concentrations of phosphates in front of the painting on the lower terrace indicated intensive human activity (Kouki 2005a, see Fig. 5). By contrast, the phosphate sample taken in front of the painting on the upper terrace was no higher than the control samples and no significant variations were observed in the

level of pH in any of the samples (Kouki 2005b).

An excavation trench (size 10 m²) was laid out at the site of pottery finds and high phosphate readings, immediately below the lower rock painting (Figs. 4 & 6). The soil was excavated in 5 cm layers. A layer of brown cultural soil, stained dark by human activity, was encountered immediately below the turf almost throughout the trench. Moreover, in front of the ‘sacrificial table’, an area of black sooty soil mixed with bits of charcoal emerged. In the first excavation layer this black feature was of an irregular shape and covered an area of ca 4 m², but as the excavation proceeded downwards it soon receded into a much smaller, roundish area. A concentration of burnt stones was found associated with the black soil. The feature can be interpreted as the remains of a fireplace (albeit not a very regularly-shaped one) kept in front of the rock painting and the ‘sacrificial table’. A flat slab found resting in the middle of the concentration of burnt stones may have acted as a foundation for the fireplace.

In front of the ‘sacrificial table’ and partly under it, a ca. 0.75 m long and 0.40 m wide area of yellowish soil, coarser and looser than in the surrounding area, probably indicated the area where Koistinen had dug in the 1960s. Four pieces of pottery clearly originating from the same vessel that Koistinen had found were found adjacent to the lens of coarse soil. As these were the only pieces of pottery found during the excavation, they confirm that the pot was indeed found under (or immediately in front of) the ‘sacrificial table’, contrary to the suspicions that have sometimes been expressed of its origin.

The layer of sooty soil extended to the fourth

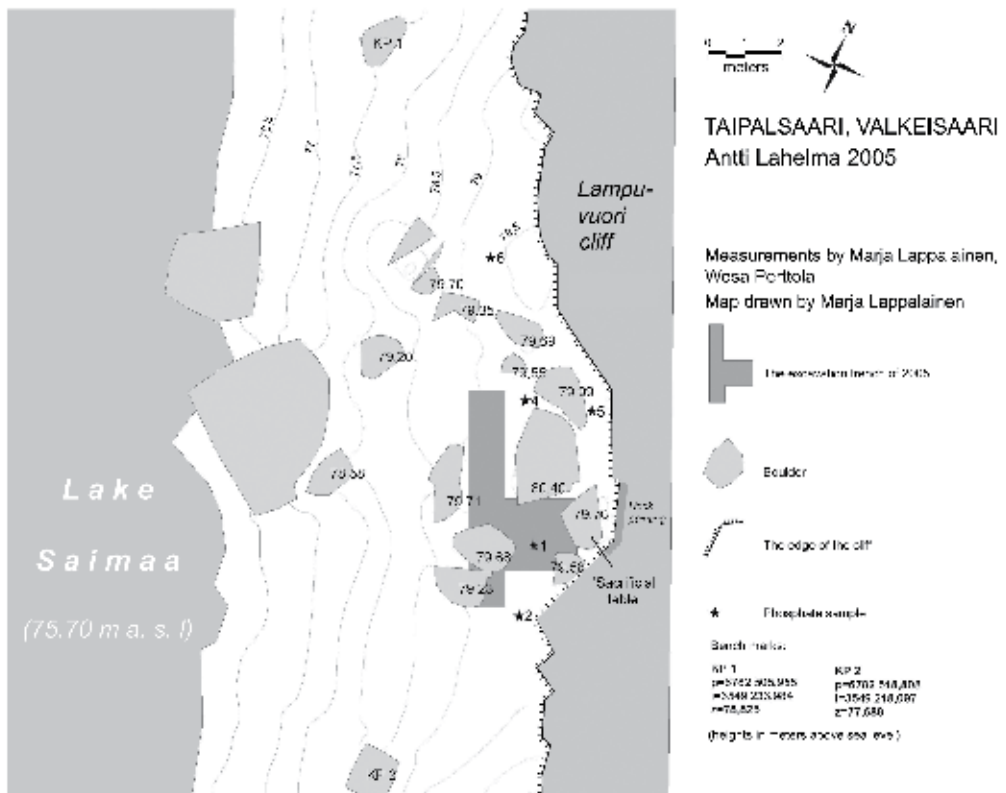


Fig. 6. An overview map of the lower terrace of Valkeisaari, with the excavation trench of 2005 shown. The figures refer to height measurements in meters above sea level. Based on a map drawn by Marja Lappalainen.

excavation layer, under which a dark brown stained soil emerged. The stained soil mostly did not exceed the sixth excavation layer (ca. 35 cm below surface). However, a clear exception to this was encountered in the northern end of the trench, where a small, distinct area of brown, stained soil extended as deep as the ninth excavation layer (ca. 50 cm below the surface). As finds of broken quartz implements were found concentrated in this soil, the feature probably represents a refuse pit dug on the terrace and intentionally filled with broken tools and other refuse.

Given the thickness of the stained, cultural layer, the number of finds in the 2005 excavations was relatively small. Altogether 47 finds clearly of a prehistoric date were collected. Of these, finds of quartz were by far the largest group.

Lithic finds

Some forty quartz artefacts and a single flint flake were found in stratified contexts during the excavations. Given the fact that three flints were among the finds of 1966, the discovery of only one flint flake (NM 35202: 3) in 2005 is rather surprising. The flake represents a grey translucent flint – completely different from the creamy, yellowish-brown flints of 1966. Moreover, the flake was found close to the surface, in the 1st excavation layer. Judging by these observations, and from the fact that it featured several unfocused impact marks, it seems possible that it represents gun- or tinderflint of the historical period (Manninen 2005).

The quartz artefacts were found in two clear concentrations: one in the sooty soil in front of

the 'sacrificial table', and the other (altogether 19 artefacts) in the refuse pit excavated in the north-western end of the trench. Although the soil in the area between these concentrations was stained dark, few finds of any kind were made outside these two concentrations. According to the archaeologist Mikael Manninen, who analysed the Valkeisaari quartz finds, the find material consists to a very large degree (58 %) of complete or fragmentary implements. Most of the implements can be identified as typological scrapers, but without use-wear analysis their function cannot be identified with any certainty. Only two of the scrapers are complete items (NM 35202: 30, 69). This high share of broken or whole implements vs. flakes (some of which may upon closer inspection still turn out to be implements) is the most notable feature of the Valkeisaari quartz assemblage. In this respect, the Valkeisaari finds differ clearly from typical quartz finds at Finnish Stone Age or Early Metal Period sites: the near-total lack of residue from processing quartz indicates that the terrace is probably neither a dwelling nor a knapping site, but something quite different.

Manninen (2005) concludes that quartz evidently has not been worked at on the Valkeisaari terrace, but complete items appear to have been brought to the island and used there to process some hard material. In the course of this activity some of the items have been broken. Broken tools have not been repaired, but have been abandoned on the terrace – or, as we have seen, deposited in the refuse pit. The two complete scrapers found in front of the 'sacrificial table' differ from this general pattern and may have been abandoned for a different reason.

Pottery

As already mentioned, only four small body sherds of pottery (NM 35202: 4- 5, 14- 15) were found during the 2005 investigations, all of them from a small area immediately in front of the 'sacrificial table'. All the pieces have a scraped inner surface, possibly resulting from the use of a wooden spatula, and one piece (NM 35202: 5) features a distinct textile impression on the outer surface. Crushed stone (including feldspar and muscovite) has been used as a temper in the clay, and impressions left in the clay suggest the use also of a fibrous, organic temper. According to

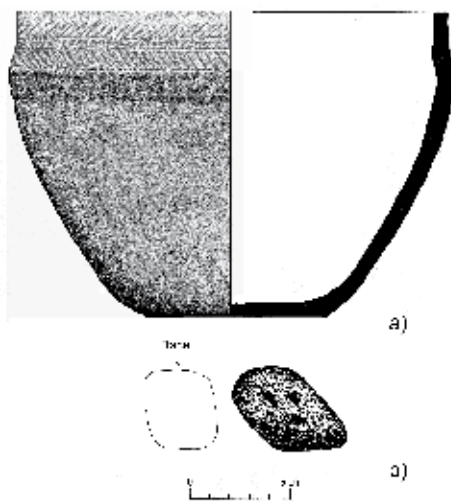


Fig. 7. A reconstruction drawing (a) of the Textile Ware pot (NM 17040: 1) found in 1966 front of the lower rock painting, based on information obtained from Luho (1968b) and Lavento (2001), and (b) of the 'anthropomorphic pebble' (NM 17040: 3) found among the sherds, apparently originally placed inside the pot. Drawings: Antti Lahelma.



Fig. 8. Fat hen (*Chenopodium album*). Photo: Antti Lahelma.



Fig. 9. Pieces of palygorskite (NM 35202: 29) found during the 2005 excavations of the Valkeisaari terrace. All finds of palygorskite were made from within a layer of sooty soil in front of the 'sacrificial table'. Scale: 1 cm. Photo: Antti Lahelma.

Mika Lavento (pers. comm. 1.12.2005) the sherds represent Textile Ware and – judging by the clay used, the preparation of the surface and the find spot – almost certainly derive from the same pot as the sherds found in 1966.

Bones

In addition to the finds of quartz and pottery, a small amount of burnt and unburnt bone fragments were found. Two of the latter were identified as belonging to a sheep or goat (*Capra hircus/Ovis aries*), which – while not impossible – seemed strange in the context of a hunter-gatherer rock painting site. It was not a great surprise, then, that these finds turned out to be recent: one of them (NM 35202: 9) was radiocarbon-dated to 90 ± 30 BP (Hela-1128), or 1805 ± 115 cal. AD.² In all likelihood, the other unburnt bones are of a similar date. They may relate to the use of the island for grazing sheep in the historical period, a practice reflected in the name of the painted cliff (*Lampuvuori* meaning 'Sheep Mountain'). However, four pieces of burnt and therefore more probably prehistoric bone were also found. Only one of the bones (NM 35202: 84) – a wing bone of a capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) – could be identified to the species (Mannermaa 2005). Unfortunately, all attempts to make AMS datings of burnt bone failed due to the small amount of bone found.

Macrofossil remains

Approximately 30 litres of soil were taken as macrofossil samples during the excavation, most of it from the fireplace in front of 'sacrificial table', but a number of samples were collected also from the refuse pit in the northern end of the excavation trench. A notable and interesting feature of the material analyzed is the comparatively large number of seeds of edible plants and berries (Pylkkö et al. 2006). The most common of these was bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), but the samples also included carbonized seeds of wild strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), raspberry (*Rubus iadeus*) and sorrel (*Rumex sp.*) However, perhaps the most interesting feature is the presence of numerous seeds of fat hen (*Chenopodium album*, Fig. 8) – a plant species alien to poor soils such as those found at Valkeisaari.

Fat hen is recognized as an indicator species of ancient settlement, which normally grows on fields and close to settlements and appears to have been introduced to Finland very early on (Suominen & Hämet-Ahti 1993: 14). Today the plant is usually thought of as a weed, but it is also a nutritious, edible plant – a close relative of the quinoa plant (*Chenopodium quinoa*) cultivated in the Andean highlands. The seeds of fat hen and related plants have traditionally been eaten as porridge or ground into flour used in baking, and its leaves can be eaten like cabbage – all of them uses mentioned already in 19th century Finnish botanical literature (e.g. Lönnrot 1866). As its English name implies, the plant has also been used to provide feed for domestic animals.

Because of the evidence of later disturbances, it is difficult to completely rule out the possibility that, like the sheep bones found in the topsoil of the terrace, the seeds of fat hen might similarly represent a late contamination of the site. Some of the seeds might conceivably have been deposited on the terrace in sheep dung. However, this is a rather remote possibility, because seeds of fat hen and other edible plants were found together with quartz implements in the lower layers (ca. 30–40 cm below surface) of the 'refuse pit' in the northern end of the trench. No signs of contamination were encountered in this part of the trench, and it is unlikely to have been affected by the 'digs' of Koistinen or Sarvas, which have probably taken place on the site of the pottery finds.

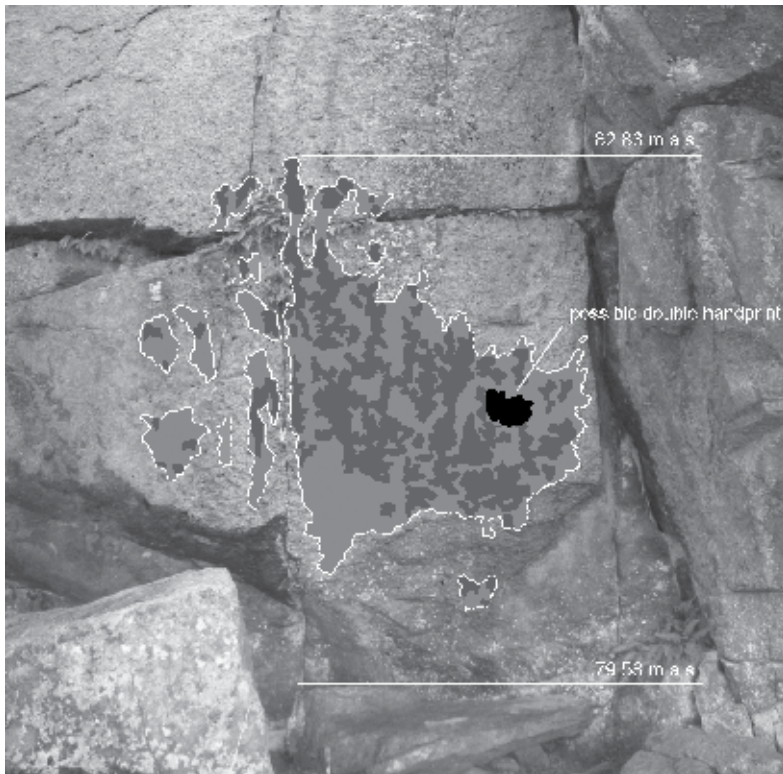


Fig. 10. A retouched photo of Valkeisaari B – the painting on the lower terrace. The area of red paint, which would otherwise be faint, is here outlined in white and filled with a grey colour. In the picture, light grey refers to vaguely red areas and dark grey indicates areas of intensive red colour. The black area represents a possible double hand-print. The highest point of the painting and the upper surface of the ‘sacrificial table’ – standing on which a part of the painting may have been made – have also been marked. Photo and photographic manipulation: Antti Lahelma.

Palygorskite pieces

During the excavations, a considerable number of finds (more than 100 small flakes) were made of a substance – at first unidentified – that resembled an unburnt, fibrous organic material (Fig. 9). As the finds were concentrated in the area of the fireplace and were confined to the layer of cultural soil, it was assumed that they might be the last remains of heavily eroded, unburnt bone or antler – a hypothesis that later proved to be mistaken. A study by the geologist Kari A. Kinnunen (2006) using X-ray diffraction and a polarization microscope showed the material to be a fibrous mineral called palygorskite (also known as

‘mountain leather’). The mineral is probably local, originating from the cracks of the cliff face. However, because the flakes were confined to the cultural layer, they may nonetheless be somehow related to human activity. Kinnunen (2006: 5–6) suggests that the rock may have been cleaned of the material before painting, but notes also that mountain leather is known to have been used as a binder in organic paints in e.g. Central America (the famous ‘Maya blue’).

DATING

The dating of the Valkeisaari paintings and the finds associated with them presents several prob-

lems, not all of which could be adequately solved at the time of writing. However, it appears that making of the Valkeisaari rock paintings may have begun already in the later Subneolithic Stone Age (around 3600 BC), and that the deposit in front of them can be dated mainly to the Early Metal Period (2nd millennium BC) and perhaps later. In other words, the painting appears to have been begun before the deposition of artefacts, but its lowest parts may well be contemporary with the deposit. The two phenomena are therefore likely to be related.

Although theoretically possible (Rowe 2001), few attempts – none of them successful – have been made to obtain direct AMS datings of red ochre rock paintings in Fennoscandia. This leaves shore displacement dating as the only viable means (so far) of dating the rock paintings of Valkeisaari (on the use of shore displacement in dating rock art, see e.g. Jussila 1999; Sognnes 2003). Shore displacement dating of the Valkeisaari paintings is not a particularly forceful illustration of the method, but an attempt can nonetheless be made and it merits a brief discussion.

The painting on the upper terrace (Valkeisaari A) is located ca. 10.5 m above the modern level of Lake Saimaa and has evidently been painted by a person standing on the rock terrace. It therefore cannot be dated using shore displacement chronology (Jussila 1999: 128). However, it is possible to suggest a rough dating for the lower area of painting (Valkeisaari B), even though this dating is wrought with uncertainties, some of them inherent in the method and some caused by problems specific to the Valkeisaari site (such as the presence of large boulders on the terrace and the unclear outer edges of the painting).

Like the upper painting, Valkeisaari B may in part have been painted by a person standing on the terrace (79.20 m a.s.l) or on the ‘sacrificial table’ (79.58 m a.s.l), but its uppermost painted area (82.83 m a.s.l) seems to lie far too high up to have been painted from dry land (Fig. 10). True, a large boulder lying close to the foot of the painting could have been used for reaching a little higher up, but even standing on the boulder it would seem to be impossible to reach to the highest parts of the painting. This suggests that the painting was begun when the terrace was still well under water and, as the painted area is 2.2 m high

and extends almost to the foot of the cliff, the process of repainting may have continued for an extensive period of time. The fact that the painting is heavily blurred (even though the cliff itself mostly remains dry even during heavy rain), as well as the discovery of some quartz artefacts somewhat rounded by rolling in the sand (Manninen 2005), may similarly indicate that human activity at the site begun already before the sandy terrace was exposed from the lake.

Establishing a shore displacement dating for rock paintings is made difficult by the fact that we do not know precisely how high above water the paintings were made. But as Jussila (1999: 122–3) argues, it seems probable that rock paintings – assuming they were painted sitting in a boat or standing on the winter ice – were generally made between 0.5 and 1.5 m above the mean surface of water. Based on this assumption, the shore displacement dating of the upper part of Valkeisaari B can be calculated as falling between 3900 and 3300 BC, the median of the dating being ca. 3600 BC.³ The lowermost part of the painting, on the other hand, lies so close to the root of the cliff that it was probably made standing on the terrace sometime after 2000 BC (cf. Jussila 1999: 128).

The deposit excavated in front of the painting can be dated more securely than the paintings. Shore displacement chronology gives a *terminus post quem*, indicating that the cultural layer cannot be older than ca. 2000 BC as the terrace emerged from water only then. Because of the well-known uncertainties associated with dating wood charcoal, no attempt was made to date the fireplace as such, but a radiocarbon date (Hela-1127) was acquired of the blackened interior of one of the rim sherds (NM 17040: 1). The result, 3100 ± 50 BP (or 1370 ± 60 cal. BC), confirms the Early Metal Period dating of the deposit. During this stage, the level of water would have been at ca. 78 m a.s.l, and the terrace much narrower and wetter than at present – a fact that fits well with the observation that the soot from the fireplace excavated has been washed over a large area on the terrace. Interestingly, the dating also coincides almost exactly with the beginnings of swidden agriculture (of barley) in the Taipalsaari region (Vuorela & Kankainen 1993).

The precise beginning and end of the deposition of material on the terrace is, on the other

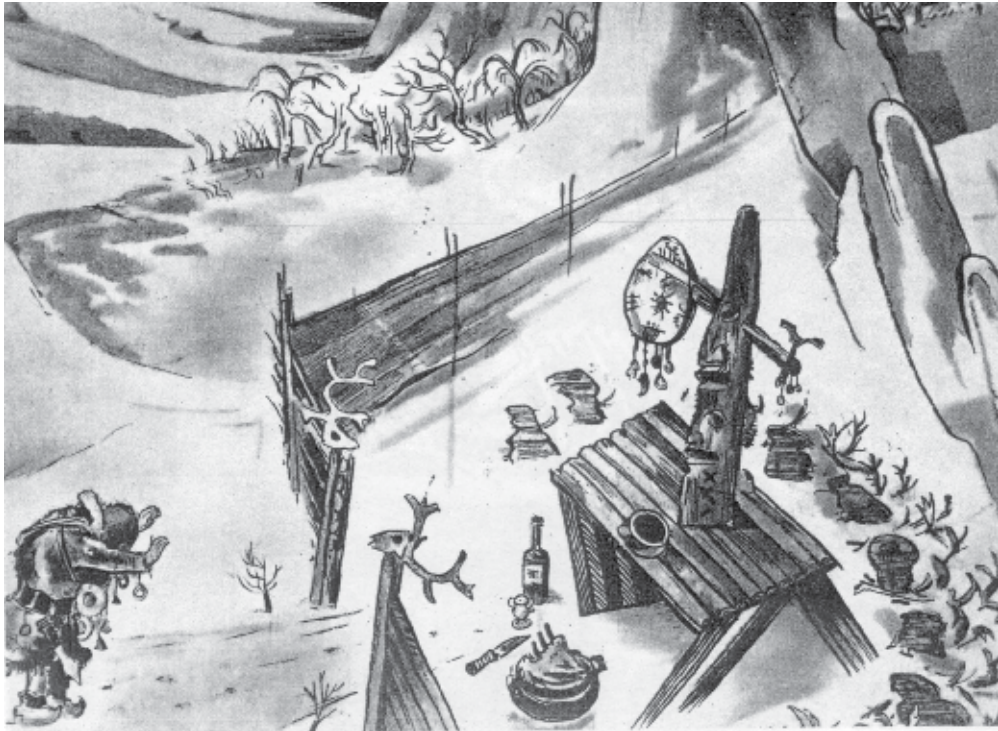


Fig. 11. A Saami shaman (noaidi) making a sacrifice to a sieidi. Note the offers of food, drink and a knife, as well as the semicircle formed by reindeer antlers and 'strangely-shaped' small sieidi-stones surrounding the sacrificial platform. Part of a large watercolour (*Björnfesten* 1930) by the Swedish artist and ethnographer Ossian Elgström (1883–1950), illustrating the different stages of a Saami bear-feast. Although a work of art, the illustrations are considered ethnographically accurate by Manker (1971).

hand, more difficult to establish. The discovery of water-worn quartz artefacts may indicate that some sort of deposition began already when the terrace still lay under water. The thickness of the stained layer of soil, on the other hand, suggests a long-standing human presence on the terrace even after it emerged from water, possibly extending beyond the Early Metal Period. In order to clarify this question, an attempt was made to date the macrofossil remains from a sample taken deep in the 'refuse pit' (layer 5, ca. 35–40 cm below surface). Bearberry seeds were the only ones big enough for dating, and even then two seeds were required for a sufficient amount of carbon. The decision (perhaps misguided) to combine two seeds into a single dating (Hela-1177) produced a surprising result: 740 ± 40 BP (1258 ± 33 cal. AD). Were this dating absolutely firm it would be

very interesting indeed, but alas the possibility (however small) that the two seeds may have been of different ages renders the result uncertain. Despite that, and given the fact that there was little evidence for modern contamination in the layer, the dating nevertheless does provide preliminary evidence suggesting that the refuse pit – and consequently the history of the site – may extend to a much younger period than that indicated by the finds of pottery and quartz.

INTERPRETATION

A ritual deposit?

Anyone who has visited the Valkeisaari terrace can easily observe that the topography of the site is simply unsuitable for a prolonged stay. The



Fig. 12. The 'anthropomorphic' cliff of Valkeisaari. The rock formation shown here lies directly above the site of excavation and the lower rock painting (Valkeisaari B, cf. fig. 4), and has been thought to resemble a human face in frontal view. The reminiscence is best brought out by the oblique light of the rising sun, and would have been even more attention-grabbing when it was unobstructed by trees and viewed from a higher level of water, as was the case during the Early Metal Period. Photo: Antti Lahelma

terrace is short and narrow (ca. 18 m long and max. 6 m wide, but mostly narrower) and littered with huge boulders that would make it difficult to even lie down, much less to build any kind of (even temporary) dwelling on the spot. With the level of water extending to the very edge of the terrace, as it would have during the Early Metal Period, the site would also have been uncomfortably damp. Moreover, a sandy terrace (*Lampuhiekka*) undoubtedly much better suited for dwelling can be found only ca. 50 m WNW of the site.

Yet it cannot be denied that the outwards-leaning cliff does offer some shelter from rain. The topography of the site does not rule out the possibility that the terrace was used for mundane

activities. It could, for example, have been a temporary shelter from the wind and the rain, used by fishermen or travellers. Are, then, the finds related to 'secular' or 'sacred' activities?

Several aspects of the finds suggest the latter alternative. First and foremost, it is difficult to imagine how a fleeting activity such as occasional visits in search of shelter from the rain could have resulted in such a heavily stained cultural layer, almost half a meter thick. Second, the finds of quartz, flint and pottery (a single pot) – as well as the near-total lack of burnt bone – seem anomalous and unusual, and suggest instead that the terrace was repeatedly used for a different kind of activity than camping or searching for shelter. This activity probably included the consumption of food, as the macrofossil remains found at the site indicate that food was brought here from the mainland. The food would have been prepared on the fireplace and may have been cooked in (or served from) the Textile Ware pot, probably deliberately stashed under the 'sacrificial table' for future use.

And third, we must not ignore the presence of the rock painting immediately in front of the deposit and the fireplace, which suggests that the site was considered sacred. As noted in the section on dating, parts of the rock painting may well be contemporary with the deposit, meaning that some connection between the two is likely to exist. Moreover, as mentioned in the introduction, the presence of fireplaces at rock art sites is emerging as a phenomenon with a wide geographical distribution. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the fireplace of Valkeisaari – and most of the finds associated with it – are of a ritual nature and related to the beliefs and practices associated with rock art. The refuse pit, located a few meters away from the epicentre of human activity and apparently filled with food remains and broken quartz implements, may represent a dump of 'sacred refuse' that was deposited ritually. The two complete quartz scrapers found in front of the painting, on the other hand, can be understood as sacrificial offerings intentionally abandoned at the site (cf. Fig 11).

When the Valkeisaari finds are here recognized as being probably of a ritual nature, this should not be taken to imply any simplistic idea of ritual remains as a category of 'non-functional' material that archaeologists find difficult to explain

otherwise (cf. Brück 1999), nor should it be understood to imply any strong dichotomy between sacred and secular activities. Ritual is not a straightforward matter (Bell 1992; Insoll 2004), and dwelling extensively upon its definition would be beside the point. As a useful point of departure, however, we may consider William Paden's (1994: 95–100) notion of ritual as *a form of display that focuses its object*, giving it undivided attention. At Valkeisaari, the main object and focus of attention is the cliff of Lampuvuori – that much seems to be indicated by the fact that it has been painted and re-painted over a long period of time. Thus the context of the finds – on the foot of a cliff probably viewed as sacred – is extraordinary, even if the finds themselves are not. Indeed, most of them represent the most typical find material (quartz tools and pottery) of the period and are evidently related to the most basic of all human activities: the preparation and consumption of food. But as we shall see, at Valkeisaari this activity appears to have had a special dimension that justifies the use of the term 'ritual deposit'.

Valkeisaari in the light of Saami ethnography

As a possible ethnographic parallel to the finds of Valkeisaari, let us consider the Saami cult of the *sieidi* – sacred cliffs and rocks viewed as living, breathing 'other-than-human persons' (cf. Lahelma in press). In northern Finland, the *sieidi* were sometimes located in small islands (such as Ukonsaari, Seitasaari and Kulta-Akka in the account below) and were associated with a sacrificial cult, involving sacrificial meals and the offering of various items, as well as of food, bones and antlers (Fig. 11). In the early years of the 20th century, the linguist Frans Äimä (1903), who had studied the Saami language of the Lake Inari region, published an intriguing account concerning the worship of the *sieidi* among his informants. This account (cf. also Ikonen 1948: 312–13) is worth quoting at some length:

Some information has been preserved concerning different sacrifices in different places. Birds and wild reindeer were offered at Ukonsaari, Seitavaara and Seitasaari. Fish, on the other hand, were offered at Kulta-Akka and according to some accounts also at Ukonsaari. Reindeer

antlers have been found at Seitasaari, and at Ukonsaari heads of reindeer bulls – complete with the antlers – and also skeletons of birds (capercaillies). "Sacrificing" took place so that the meat and fish – the best quality available – were taken to a sacrificial site, where it was cooked and eaten. "The rationale was", said one informant, "that the god is also fed when the sacrificers eat". For this reason, "no matter how much people ate, they would always return hungry from the sacrificial site". By sacrificing one hoped for one's "luck" (in fishing, hunting and reindeer herding) to continue or improve. (Äimä 1903: 114–15, my translation)

The obvious parallel with Valkeisaari is the taking of food to a sacred island and cooking it there in a communal sacrificial feast. However, perhaps the most remarkable detail in Äimä's account is the notion that the *sieidi* were thought to partake in the sacrificial meal and to eat together with the sacrificers – an aspect of Saami religion that can be understood as a reflecting an animistic system of beliefs (cf. Harvey 2005). And here we must introduce a feature of the Valkeisaari cliff not yet mentioned: its allegedly anthropomorphic shape.

The 'stone persons' of Valkeisaari

Immediately above the excavation trench and the lower rock painting, a natural rock formation in the cliff forms what many observers have regarded an anthropomorphic, face-like shape (Fig. 12). A photograph of the formation was first published by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen (1981), who believed that the shape was likely to have been a factor in choosing the cliff for painting. He further noted that Saami *sieidi* are sometimes similarly anthropomorphic in shape and that as such they resemble the Finnish rock art sites. Subsequently, it has become quite popular to identify such shapes at rock painting sites. For example, Pentikäinen and Miettinen (2003) discuss a dozen or so purportedly anthropomorphic rock painting sites in Finland, Fandén (2001) presents a number of examples from Northern Sweden and Slinning (2002) from Telemark, Norway. Taskinen (2006) even goes so far as to assert that ca. 25 % of all Finnish sites feature such shapes, listing altogether 28 sites claimed to be more or less human- or animal-shaped from certain viewpoints.

These are interesting observations, even if they are in most cases impossible to validate. The anthropologist Stewart Guthrie (1993) has argued that anthropomorphism (or the projection of human features or agency into non-human things) is a universal strategy of perception with deep evolutionary roots. His claim appears to be based on a firm foundation – a wealth of examples of anthropomorphism in the most different kinds of material, ranging from prehistoric artefacts to modern advertising and arts, theology and philosophy. If Guthrie is correct, we may safely assume that already Stone Age hunter-fishermen would have attributed anthropomorphic features to certain rocks and cliffs.

Alas, from the point of view of prehistoric archaeology anthropomorphism is a problematic phenomenon, because the identification of a rock as having ‘anthropomorphic’ features is a fundamentally subjective experience – not an empirically verifiable, scientific observation. In the absence of living informants we have very few means of knowing what specific formations attracted the attention of a prehistoric people (and what were ignored), and even fewer ways of knowing what (if any) cultural meanings were once attached to them. Consequently, most claims made by modern scholars of identifying anthropomorphic formations at rock art sites should be viewed with a sizeable grain of salt. Without wishing to entirely deny these observations their value, one must nonetheless insist for a less subjective approach to the question. Anthropomorphism becomes an archaeologically approachable phenomenon only with concrete evidence for its appreciation in the past. For example, we might be able to identify traces paintings that accentuate the ‘human shape’ of the rock (as is the case in some Palaeolithic caves, see Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998: 86), or uncover archaeological material that suggest a preoccupation with anthropomorphic rocks (for a more detailed discussion on anthropomorphism and rock art, see Lahelma, in press). Regrettably, few rock painting sites in Finland can be said to qualify these criteria.

The site of Valkeisaari, however, is among the few sites that may just qualify. First, the shape of the cliff – resembling a human face seen in frontal view – is arguably more striking than most other candidates and it is located directly above

the painting and the ritual deposit, not merely in their vicinity. The most interesting aspect, however, is the discovery of a small (size 5.7 x 3.5 x 3.7 cm) ‘anthropomorphic’ pebble (Fig. 7b) among the pottery sherds, flints and sooty soil in 1966. The stone, which has three natural depressions giving the rough appearance of a human face, is mentioned in the find report (Huurre 1966) and it was given a catalogue number (NM 17040: 2), but ignored in the article written of the Valkeisaari find (Luhio 1968b) and all subsequent publications. However, the stone is a significant find because according to the find report, it appeared to have been originally placed *inside the pot*. In other words, it seems that it was found in a closed archaeological context, and can thus be interpreted as evidence that the people who made the Valkeisaari paintings did indeed ascribe cultural meanings to unmodified, anthropomorphic rocks. This may be as close as we will ever get to actual proof that anthropomorphism really was a phenomenon of some significance for the hunter-fishermen of the Finnish interior.

At least two possible archaeological parallels to the Valkeisaari stone from can be cited in the Finnish archaeological record. An unusual piece of sandstone (size 4.2 x 3.2 x 3.9 cm) said to resemble a human head was found in underwater excavations in front of the Astuvansalmi rock painting (Grönhagen 1994). The object is mostly natural, but may have been worked around the ‘neck’. Its prehistoricity and relation to the rock painting, however, are uncertain. The second stone is a smooth, round cobblestone – not at all anthropomorphic in shape – but bears a red ochre painting of a net figure, thus showing that rock paintings could sometimes also be ‘portable’ (Väkeväinen 1982). The stone, found at the Late Comb Ware site of Nästinristi in Laitila, southwestern Finland, lay buried in sand close to a group of red ochre graves. ¹⁴C-datings obtained from pit hearths and graves situated near the painted stone ranged from 4910 ± 130 BP (Hel-1349) to 4460 ± 130 BP (Hel-1348), indicating that the dating of the site (and most probably also of the stone) lies between ca. 4000 and 3000 cal. BC.

To continue the analogy with Saami sieidi, it can be added that aside from large boulders and cliffs, the Saami also worshipped small, often somehow strangely-shaped sieidi-stones that

could be carried around from one seasonal camp to another, or functioned as the foci of worship at a wider sacred site (see e.g. the examples in Manker 1957: 127–9, 237–43, and cf. Fig. 11). The ‘portable rock painting’ of Nästinristi and the Valkeisaari stone can be compared to such cultic stones. Perhaps the anthropomorphic cliff (or the entire island even) formed the wider context of the sacred site, and the small anthropomorphic pebble a concentration of the supernatural power of the site: a living ‘stone person’ (cf. Harvey 2005) that acted as a focus of worship. Like the Saami *seiidi*, the stone may have been communicated with, asked for assistance in questions of subsistence, and fed in sacrificial meals. Perhaps the fact that the stone was placed inside a pot – probably used for cooking and serving food – finds an explanation in such an association with sacrificial meals.

Both the paintings made on the Lampuvuori cliff and the food consumed in front of it may be understood as forms of ritual communication with the sacred, physically manifested by the anthropomorphic rock cliff. If we follow Paden’s (1994: 95–100) definition of ritual, mentioned above, we may understand the consumption of food at the foot of the cliff as way of ritually focusing attention to the sacred site – the anthropomorphic rock cliff – which may have been represented in the ritual by the small anthropomorphic pebble. The pebble and the site as a whole may have been thought to act as intermediaries or gateways between humans and the supernatural world (cf. Lahelma 2005b). Furthermore, following Paden (1994: 98), the consumption of food at the foot of the cliff can also be understood as a form of ritual display or drama, which expresses the principle of sharing food so central to the hunter-gatherer ethos. If the interpretation offered here is correct, it is also a proclamation concerning the place of humans in nature (here represented by rocks): not above or superior, as we are accustomed to think, but fundamentally equal. Eating food together with rocks – strange though the practice may seem to us – may have been a way of symbolically expressing and ritually sanctioning this delicate and vulnerable state of balance with nature, on which the hunter-gatherer way of life depended.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The recent results from investigations such as those of Valkeisaari, Flatruet, Högberget and Ruksesbåkti have shown beyond all doubt that even small-scale excavations at rock art sites can produce much new information concerning the dating, making and ‘meaning’ of the sites. While it is true that some excavations have failed to produce any finds, and that many rock painting sites seem unpromising (at least for excavations on dry land) because they are typically associated with coarse boulder soils, the results of the recent excavations clearly should encourage more ‘archaeological’ approaches to the study of rock art.

In interpretations of rock art, excavations and other basic archaeological methods can help to decrease our dependence on iconographic interpretations or ‘phenomenological’ approaches – or, at least, to introduce some concrete material to back up such interpretations. At the same time, they emphasise the local aspects of rock art and its specific place in a local prehistoric sequence. Iconographic readings of rock art have tended to be oblivious to questions of time and space, leading to comparisons between individual rock-art motifs of faraway places (e.g. Malmer 1981). While there is little doubt that many similarities exist in the iconographies of the various hunter-gatherer rock art sites of Northern Eurasia, we also need to address the question of how – and for what purpose – this iconography was used. And here simple applications of basic archaeological methods (especially excavation) can prove to be very useful indeed.

The idea of a possible connection between Finnish rock paintings and the Saami cult of the *seiidi* is not new. Writing on the similarities between Saami shaman drum figures and rock art motifs, Ville Luho posed the question (albeit without attempting to answer it) already in the early 1970s:

When we recall moreover that the Saami have worshipped rock cliffs, among other things, as *seiidi*, and that the *seiidi* are commonly located on lakeshores, peninsulas and islands even, it is justifiable to ask what relation do the rock paintings have with Saami beliefs and mythology. Were the paintings perhaps made by the distant ancestors of the Saami, or do Saami beliefs perchance reflect the beliefs of those people, who were re-

sponsible for the rock paintings. (Luho 1971: 14, my translation)

For one reason or another, Luho's musings did not attract much attention, and Sarvas (1973: 27) for one dismissed them as more or less irrelevant to the interpretation of Finnish rock art. The standard interpretations of Finnish rock art came to rely on Sarvas' (1969, 1973) own application of the (now widely discredited) 'hunting magic' theory and Anna-Leena Siikala's (1981) interpretation of the art as an expression of Siberian-style shamanism and animal ceremonialism. Neither of these authors saw a relation between Finnish rock art and local ethnohistorical sources: Sarvas did not cite any ethnographic parallels to back his interpretation and Siikala, although ethnographically much better informed, chose to pick her parallels mostly among the geographically distant peoples of Siberia. But as Núñez (1995) has pointed out, evidently more relevant analogs can be found closer to home – in the ethnography and folklore of northern Fennoscandia.

Several studies on the location and iconography of North Fennoscandian hunter-gatherer rock art have claimed close parallels with Saami religion (e.g. Helskog 1987; Autio 1991; Núñez 1995; Shumkin 2000; Fandén 2001; Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 2001; Slinning 2002; Schanche 2004; Lahelma 2005b, in press). Such claims are sometimes met with resistance or even outright hostility (Schanche 2004: 102–4), perhaps in some measure because of the political dimension of Saami prehistory (Krogh 2004). But there is also the undeniable and disturbing fact that in many parts of Fennoscandia (although possibly not all: see e.g. Mulk & Bayliss-Smith 2001; Mandt & Lødøen 2006: 33–45) the two phenomena are separated by a wide chronological gap. The Finnish rock paintings, for example, clearly seem to predate the formation of distinct Saami ethnic groups, making it anachronistic to associate the paintings with either 'Saami' or 'Finns'. Are we then merely dealing with correspondences on a very general level, or is there a more 'direct' link between rock art religion and Saami religion? And if there is, how do we deal with the problem of apparent continuity in iconography and religious practice on the scale of several millennia? These are difficult questions to answer – but the evidence for some form of continuity seems to be mounting.

The results of the Valkeisaari excavations can be interpreted as supporting Luho's notion of a possible link between Saami beliefs and practices and those associated with Finnish rock art. Like the Saami of Lake Inari, the prehistoric inhabitants of Lake Saimaa region appear to have repeatedly taken food to a sacred island, cooked it there and 'shared' it with the god of the island, manifested by a rock cliff. Viewed together with the evidence from the iconography of the rock paintings, which similarly suggest a link with Saami religion (e.g. Núñez 1995; Lahelma 2005b), the parallels are too obvious to be overlooked: it is more probable that a connection exists than that it doesn't. Irrespective of the reasons or mechanisms behind this connection, which clearly require much more research, it offers a hope of some day solving the 'mystery' of the rock paintings.

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¹ It has to be mentioned, however, that excavations have been standard practice in the study of Upper Palaeolithic cave art ever since its discovery and authentication (see e.g. Leroi-Gourhan 1968; Bahn & Vertut 1997).

² All ¹⁴C-dates from Valkeisaari were calibrated using OxCal v3.10, with atmospheric data from Reimer et. al. (2004).

³ Calculated using the *Ranta-ajoitus v1.0* program, which gives a shore displacement dating to sites located in the Lake Saimaa region. The program has been developed by Mikroliitti Ltd and is freely available at <http://www.mikroliitti.fi/rajoitus.htm> (Accessed 18.3.2006).

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Personal comments

The following persons have offered their expert opinion in questions pertaining to the Valkeisaari site:
 Prof. Mika Lavento, University of Helsinki, Dept. of Cultural Studies (Institute of Archaeology)
 PhD (FL) Pekka Sarvas, archaeologist (retired), Helsinki

PAPER III

**Lahelma, A. in press a. Communicating with
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Communicating with “Stone Persons”: Anthropomorphism, Saami Religion and Finnish Rock Art

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‘Christ-like’ shell to go on sale

A bar manager in Switzerland has announced plans to sell an oyster shell resembling the face of Jesus Christ, according to local media. Matteo Brandi, 38, may hope to repeat the success of a Florida woman who sold a piece of toast said to bear an image of the Virgin Mary for \$28,000. The Italian said he had found the shell, whose contents have since been eaten, in a batch two years ago. The oyster stuck to his hand as if God was calling him, he said.

BBC news 13.1.2005

Introduction: The “Face on Mars”

In 1976, the American space probe *Viking 1 Orbiter* took a photograph of the surface of the planet Mars, showing a region called Cydonia. The photo seems to show an enormous human face, almost 1.5 km long from one end to the other, staring back at the cameras of the spaceship. Amused by the discovery, NASA scientists published the image with a caption that described it as showing eroded mesa-like landforms, including a “huge rock formation in the centre, which resembles a human head [...] formed by shadows giving the illusion of eyes, nose and mouth” (Jet Propulsion Laboratory 1976).

NASA hardly anticipated the reaction inspired by the photograph. In the past three decades, the “Face on Mars” has become an icon of popular culture, a common element of conspiracy theories and UFO-mythology (Sagan 1996: 52-55). Interpreted in lay literature as the vestiges of a lost civilization, the “face” has been compared to the Sphinx of Giza and the Shroud of Turin, featured in numerous ‘New Age’ books, Internet pages and even a major Hollywood movie (*Mis-*

sion to Mars, directed by Brian De Palma in 2000). More detailed images of the rock formation taken by *Mars Global Surveyor* in 1998 and 2001 have thrown cold water on theories of ancient Martian civilizations, and the whole incident could easily be dismissed as being just another example of the “lunatic fringe” of science. However, there is a more interesting side to this story that has to do with



Fig. 1. A photograph (P-17384) of the Cydonia region of Mars, taken by *Viking 1* on the 31st of July 1976. The “face” is located in the upper central part of the image. Photo: NASA.

anthropomorphism, or the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman things such as rock formations.

People attribute human shape and qualities (such as agency) to the widest range of objects and phenomena imaginable. The anthropologist Stewart Guthrie (1993) has argued that anthropomorphism is a universal strategy that logically arises from a kind of betting game. Guthrie writes that

[...] we anthropomorphize because guessing that the world is humanlike is a good bet. It is a bet because the world is uncertain, ambiguous, and in need of interpretation. It is a good bet because the most valuable interpretations usually are those that disclose the presence of whatever is important to us. That usually is other humans. (Guthrie 1993: 3).

Because our species has evolved in environments where we have to deal with both predators and prey, our cognitive systems have evolved so as to work on a ‘better safe than sorry’ principle that leads to ‘hyper-sensitive agent detection’. Since early prehistory, the most important elements in the environments of both humans and animals have been other humans and animals. Humans and animals affect our lives more than anything else, both negatively and positively, making it vital to detect all possible animals and humans in our environments. Humans, therefore, have a deeply intuitive tendency of projecting human features onto non-human aspects of the environment, and we commonly perceive intentional agency even in ‘dead’ objects. We speak of “Mother Nature”, talk to a car or a computer as if it could understand us, or mistake an upright rock for a human.

Guthrie sees a close relationship between anthropomorphism and animism; in his view, both anthropomorphism and animism arise from the same, largely unconscious perceptual strategy of detecting humans and animals (Guthrie 1993: 61). This strategy inevitably leads to numerous errors, but according to Guthrie, these are “reasonable errors” in the sense that they increase our chances of sur-

vival. In an ambiguous and threatening world, making such errors gives us an evolutionary advantage over the reverse strategy of assuming no agents without concrete proof of their presence. It yields more in occasional big wins and avoiding big losses than it costs in more frequent little failures. As a consequence, our intuition does not require much solid evidence for detecting agency, but easily ‘jumps into conclusions’.

The relevance of the “Face on Mars” or an oyster shell claimed to bear the face of Jesus Christ to archaeology may not be immediately clear. To most archaeologists, such phenomena would probably appear strange or ridiculous, because in modern Western culture anthropomorphism is rarely attributed any spiritual significance. But however bizarre such things may appear, they bear evidence of the pervasiveness of anthropomorphism even in today’s world. Many non-Western peoples do attribute cultural meanings – often related to animism – to anthropomorphic rocks and similar “natural” phenomena. And because anthropomorphism and animism are (according to Guthrie 2002) strategies that are shared not only by anatomically modern humans but even many animal species, we should be prepared to encounter them in prehistory also.

Anthropomorphism and Finnish rock art

Although the examples discussed by Guthrie are mostly taken from contemporary advertising, arts, theology, philosophy, etc., he does present a few instances of anthropomorphism in a prehistoric context (e.g. Guthrie 1993: 120, 134-135) and it seems easy to find more. In this paper I will concentrate on the case of seeing “faces” in natural rock formations, particularly in Finnish rock art and Saami (Lapp) sacred sites known as *sieidi*.

Finnish rock paintings

Finnish rock art, which consists of paintings only, is typically located on outcroppings of rock (usually granite or gneiss) that form vertical surfaces rising directly from a lake (Kivikäs 1995, 2000, 2005, Taskinen 2000, Lahelma 2005). Only a few paintings do not

conform to this general pattern of location: in less than ten cases, paintings have been made on large boulders rather than cliffs, and a small number of sites are associated with flowing water rather than lakes. There is not, however, a single painting known that is not (or has not been) intimately associated with water.

The number of rock paintings known to exist in Finland today is a little over one hundred. Some of these may be ‘pseudopaintings’ or natural accumulations of red ochre, but at least 90 sites have identifiable figures and are likely to be of a prehistoric date. All the paintings are made with red ochre and feature a limited range of motifs, including images of elks, boats, stick-figure humans hand stencils and geometric signs. Interpretations given to the art include hunting magic (Sarvas 1969), totemism (Autio 1995) and shamanism (e.g. Siikala 1981, Lahelma 2001, 2005). Of these, shamanism is commonly favoured today (e.g. Miettinen 2000 calls it a ‘canonical’ interpretation), even though alternative interpretations still persist alongside the shamanistic one.

Geographically the paintings are concentrated in the Finnish Lake Region in the central and eastern parts of the country. The area around Lake Saimaa is particularly rich in rock paintings, but some sites are located far from this main rock art region. Five sites have been found in the vicinity of Helsinki, two in the far northeast of the country, and one site in the southwest, close to Turku (Åbo). Although the first rock painting in Finland was discovered already in 1911, the vast majority of sites have only been found in the past three decades. One may therefore still expect the distribution map to change somewhat.

Because the paintings are almost without exception associated with water, they can be dated by the shore displacement method. The Holocene isostatic land uplift and associated tilting of the Fennoscandian landmass has been a major factor in the formation of the Finnish landscape. As a result of these processes, some paintings evidently originally made from a boat close to the surface of a lake are now situated more than ten meters above water. Assuming that no scaffolding or other artificial means were used to paint higher than

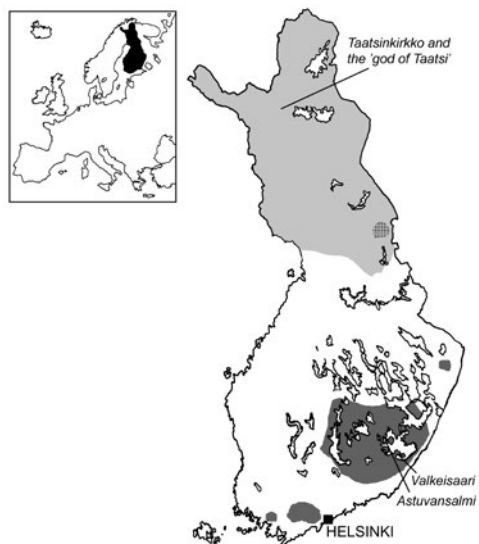


Fig. 2. Distributions of prehistoric rock paintings (dark grey areas, based on Kivikäs 1995 with additions) and historically known sieidi (light grey areas, based on Sarmela 2000) in Finland, with some of the sites discussed shown. The distributions overlap in a small area in Northern Finland, close to the eastern border, where two rock paintings have been found.

water level (which seems like a rather safe assumption to make), the probable age of the paintings can be calculated based on our knowledge of the hydrological history of Finnish lakes. According to current understanding, the paintings of the large Lake Saimaa region date from approximately 5000-1500 cal. BC (Jussila 1999; Seitsonen 2005a), and similar datings have been suggested for other areas as well (e.g. Seitsonen 2005b). This locates the paintings mainly within the period of the Subneolithic Comb Ware cultures, which practiced a hunting-gathering-fishing economy. However, the rock painting tradition appears to continue to the early part of the Early Metal Period (1900 cal. BC – 300 cal. AD). Evidence of barley cultivation as early as 2200 cal. BC has recently been found in the Lake Region (Mika Lavento pers. comm.) Seeing that many of the finds associated with the rock paintings date from the Early Metal Period (fig. 10), rock paintings appear still to have been in active use

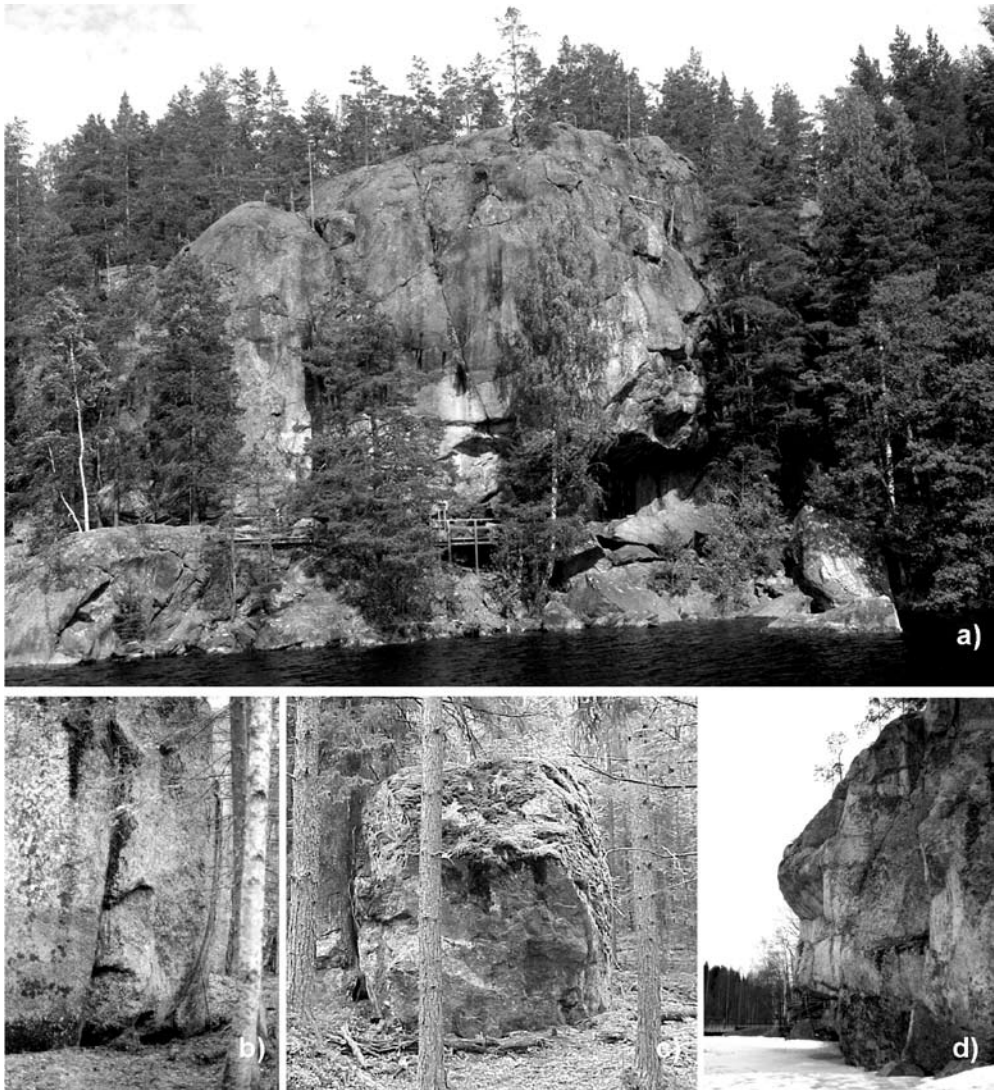


Fig. 3. Some Finnish rock painting sites that have been perceived as anthropomorphic in shape: a) Astuvansalmi, b) Lakiasuonvuori, c) Viherinkoski A, d) Mertakallio. Photos: Eero Siljander (a), Antti Lahelma (b & d), Miikka Pyykkönen (c)

when primitive agriculture was introduced in the Lake Region.

Seeing “faces” at rock art sites

All humans are fascinated with faces and face-like shapes. Even newborn infants show an interest in human faces, and children display great competence in recognising emotions, attractiveness or individual features of human faces already at a very young age (Johnson

& Morton 1991). When children grow, faces acquire emotional and social significance. As Guthrie writes, “*Choosing among interpretations of the world, we remain condemned to meaning, and the greatest meaning has a human face*” (Guthrie 1993: 204). This fascination with faces is not learned, but based on human biology, and appears to have been characteristic of hominids for hundreds of thousands of years (see below). Seeing “faces” in

natural objects is thus a particularly interesting case of the process of anthropomorphism.

That some of the cliffs where rock paintings occur in Finland exhibit human-like “faces” has been recognised for some time. The archaeologist Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen was the first to publish this observation in 1981, although according to Milton Núñez (pers. comm.) it was first discovered by Ushio Maeda, a Japanese exchange student who studied archaeology at the University of Helsinki in the early 1970’s. Maeda noticed that the large and important rock painting site of Astuvansalmi resembles a huge human face in profile view, its eyelids closed, as if it were sleeping (fig. 3a). Taavitsainen presented three further examples – the paintings of Mertakallio, Löppösenluola and Valkeisaari, all located in South-Eastern Finland (Taavitsainen 1981, figs. 1, 3 and 4). Of these, the three first mentioned sites include formations that are said to resemble a human face in profile, where as at Valkeisaari, it is possible to recognise a human face in frontal view. The above mentioned sites remain among the most striking examples of anthropomorphism in Finnish rock art.

Several other examples of anthropomorphic rock painting sites have been presented. Miettinen sees a human face in profile in the painted rock of Verla (Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003: 12). At the site of Lakiasuonvuori it is possible to distinguish two faces, one in profile (Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003: 11) and one resembling half of a human face (fig. 3b), seen as if it were peering from behind a corner. The painted boulder of Viherinkoski A (fig. 3c) has the rough appearance of a human head. The site of Ilmuksenvuori includes two features that have attracted the attention of modern observers. One is a large granite head, with a nose, chin and eyes formed by the natural features of rock, rising from the lake (Kivikäs 2000: 42-43). Some remains of red ochre paint can be seen on the “head,” but it does not seem to have been applied to make the features more human-like. A second human-like formation at the same site illustrates the pitfalls associated with these kinds of observations. Kivikäs notes the “gnome-like” shape of the formation, but

fails to appreciate the fact that it consists of rapakivi-granite – an easily crumbling type of rock that is unlikely to have retained its shape for millennia.

The list of purportedly anthropomorphic sites could be continued. But regardless of the number of examples presented, this kind of “face-spotting” remains a somewhat dubious branch of rock art research. Recognising human features in natural cliffs is a fundamentally subjective experience. How can we, in the absence of living informants, know what formations were considered anthropomorphic by a Stone Age people? And how can even begin to guess what (if any) cultural meanings were attached to them? Did these “faces” in rock stimulate religious feelings or just amusement and curiosity?

Although the significance of anthropomorphic natural formations is clearly a difficult subject for prehistoric archaeology, a number ways to tackle the question can be suggested. It would, for example, be possible to arrange different kinds of experiments in which test persons are brought to the vicinity of an “anthropomorphic” rock and asked to record their observations. Something like this was attempted in 1993, when two young Khanty brothers, Yeremey and Ivusef Sopotchin, were brought to the rock painting of Astuvansalmi and their behaviour at the site was observed. The brothers, sons of a Khanty shaman, are said to have immediately recognised the cliff as a sacred site and to have forbidden anyone from climbing on top of it. Furthermore, they claimed to recognise some of the paintings as representing scenes from Khanty mythology, made sacrifices of money, muttered prayers in Khanty and acted out a ritual shooting of the rock (Pentikäinen 1994, Pentikäinen & Miettinen 2003: 13-16). However, the artificial setting of this experiment does not seem to stand to closer scrutiny. The Khanty are natives of the extremely flat River Ob region, where rocky cliffs such as Astuvansalmi practically do not exist (Jordan 2003: 79). Moreover, given the costly arrangements of the trip and the presence of academics and reporters (whose employer, a popular magazine called

Seura, had paid for the experiment), it seems more than likely that the brothers had an idea of what kind of behaviour was expected of them and have performed accordingly.

A second approach lies in studying the paintings themselves, which may provide clues concerning the meanings associated with the rock. At some Palaeolithic caves, rock formations have been artificially emphasised with paint so as to make them more human-like in appearance (Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998: 90-91). These provide evidence that the Palaeolithic painters perceived some rock formations as anthropomorphic and assigned a special significance to them. Examples of similar treatment of the rock surface are difficult to find in Finnish rock art, but the painting of Uutelanvuori (fig. 4) in South-Eastern Finland should be mentioned, even though the case is tentative at best. The site includes a protruding, fractured formation of rock (height 2.5 m) that has the rough appearance of a human being (head and upper part of the torso) facing left. A ring-shaped figure and some vertical strokes have been painted on the formation, possibly in order to form the “eye” of the anthropomorph and to enhance its outlines (Kivikäs 1995: 208-209; Miettinen 2000: 101-103).

Finally, analogies to the anthropomorphic rocks may be sought in ethnographic literature. This clearly seems to be the most promising route of investigation. As Núñez (1995) has pointed out, perhaps the best parallels for Finnish rock paintings in recent ethnography appear to be found in the Saami cult of the *sieidi*, or sacred stones worshipped as exhibiting a supernatural power. But before reviewing these parallels, let us take a closer look at what the *sieidi* are and how they should be understood.

Similarities between Saami *sieidi* and Finnish rock paintings

As numerous authors (e.g. Holmberg 1915, Itkonen 1948, Manker 1957, Hultkrantz 1985, Mulk 1994) have pointed out, Saami religion and religious practice was deeply rooted in space and landscape, enacted through topographic myths and sacred sites. The *sieidi* (variously spelled *seita*, *seite*, *siejdde*, etc., and called *sihti*, *bassi* or *storjunkare* in some sources) are a group of sacred sites, most commonly consisting of a large rock that was perceived as being somehow distinct from its surrounding landscape. Although the word may be a relatively late loan from Norwegianian



Fig. 4. The ‘three-dimensional’ stone man of Uutelanvuori (inside the white rectangle). The drawing on the right shows the outlines of the rock formation and the painted marks on it (red hues selected with Adobe PhotoShop from the photograph on the left). Photo and drawing: Antti Lahelma

seid < Old Norse *seið(r)*, as Parpola (2004) has recently argued, the cult of the *seiði* is generally considered to belong to the most archaic aspects of Saami pre-Christian religion with possible Stone Age roots (e.g. Itkonen 1948: 67, Hultkrantz 1985: 25, Sarmela 2000: 45).

Aside from large boulders, a *seiði* could consist of a solid cliff, an entire island, peninsula or mountain. In such cases, the sanctity of the site was often concentrated on a small object, usually a strangely-shaped stone, which served as the focus of worship. And while most of the *seiði* were stationary and fixed in the landscape, some could be moved around on migrations. Historical sources speak of wooden *seiði* also, but although wooden ‘idols’ were undoubtedly worshipped by the Saami, it is unclear if the Saami in fact called them *seiði* or not (Manker 1957: 30). Hundreds of *seiði* are known throughout Northern Fennoscandia (Manker 1957). In Finland, the number of known sites is a little over one hundred. Itkonen (1948: 316-321) lists 88 stone *seiði* in Northern Finland, but his list can be complemented from other sources (e.g. Paulaharju 1932). No comprehensive study of the Finnish sites has yet been completed.

The *seiði* were intimately associated with Saami means of subsistence, particularly with hunting and fishing, but in later history also with reindeer herding. By worshipping a *seiði* and sacrificing a share of the hunted animals or fish to it, one could broker for hunting- or fishing luck. Apart from hunting luck, the *seiði* were thought to be able to bestow health, safe travel and general success in life and act as oracles consulted when making important decisions. At some of the *seiði*, the Saami shamans or *noaidi* would chant *joiks* and fall in trance. The economic association of the *seiði* is reflected in their locations (Paulaharju 1932: 10-11). Fishermen’s *seiði* are always located close to fishing waters (Hultkrantz 1985: 25-26), where as hunters of wild reindeer usually had their *seiði* in the mountains and those of reindeer herders are located close to migratory routes. The powers of the *seiði* varied. Particularly powerful ones were widely worshipped by the Saami regardless of livelihood (the island of Äijih [or Ukonsaari]



Fig. 5. The famous *seiði* of Taatsi in Kittilä, Finnish Lapland, was reminiscent of a human face in profile. The *seiði* was vandalised in the early part of the 20th century, and only a part of the rock remains today. Photo taken by Samuli Paulaharju in 1920 (Finnish National Board of Antiquities).

in Finnish Lapland is a famous example; see Bradley 2000: 3-5), while others were private and worshipped by a single family.

Anthropo- or zoomorphic shape has been regarded as a characteristic feature of the *seiði*. It was not necessary for a stone to be human-like in order to be considered sacred, but according to some sources (e.g. Itkonen 1948: 310) human features made the stone more powerful. Such stones were, according to Itkonen, called *keäd’ge-olmuš* (“stone person”), where as non-anthropomorphic stones were called *passe-keäd’gi* (“sacred stone”). In spite of this, an anthropomorphic shape does not seem to have been a very common trait. Although many written sources stress the human form of the *seiði*, this may to some extent reflect the views of outside observers. Rather than mentioning human shape, Saami stories and legends typically speak of spirit beings that revealed the locations of *seiði* in



Fig. 6. *The sieidi of Somasjäyri in Enontekiö, Finnish Lapland, appears Janus-faced: a human profile can be distinguished on two sides of the stone. Photo: Petri Halinen.*

dreams, or of accidents and strange occurrences (Itkonen 1948: 320).

In Manker's list of 220 stone and cliff 'idols' worshipped by the Saami, an anthropomorphic figure was associated with 28 sites and a further 25 sites were seen as zoomorphic (Manker 1957: 34, table 2). The ratio of anthropomorphic vs. non-representative rocks thus seems to be similar in both the sieidi and the Finnish rock paintings. Human shapes seen in the rock include faces, commonly seen in profile, sitting figures and (more rarely) standing figures. Examples described by Manker as particularly humanlike include the sitting "male" figure of Ruksiskerke, the "female" figure at Riokokallo, a striking figure of a face seen in profile at Passekårtje, the human-like stone at Håbbot, with an open mouth that received offerings of tobacco, and the stones of Datjepakte and Fatmomakke (Manker's [1957] survey numbers 57, 168, 243, 359, 404 and 458). In Finland, famous examples of anthropomorphic sieidi include the 'god of

Taatsi' in Kittilä (fig. 5) and the sieidi of Somasjäyri in Enontekiö (fig. 6). Regarding the zoomorphic sieidi, Manker (1957: 34) notes that most of them appear to resemble birds in shape, which corresponds to statements made by Niurenius and Lundius in the 17th century that the Saami worship 'bird-shaped' stones (cited in Manker 1957: 31-32).

Similarities in landscape and 'soundscape'

Aside from the anthropomorphic features, several other similarities exist between the Finnish rock paintings and Saami sieidi. Similarities in topography are perhaps the most obvious example, although insufficient data concerning the precise locations of Finnish sieidi prevent a detailed analysis. The sieidi and rock paintings are by no means identically located. The sieidi can, for example, be located on hill- or mountaintops with no water nearby, which is never the case with Finnish rock paintings. But differences are only to be expected, given the fact that most rock paintings are found in

low-lying lake regions and most sieidi known to us lie in northern mountain country, where lakes are comparatively rare.

The association with anomalous topography is perhaps the most striking similarity. For example, small caves and cavities are found both at the sieidi, such as the island of Äijih (Ukonsaari), and some rock paintings, including the sites of Kurtinvuori, Enkelinpesä and Ukonvuori (Kivikäs 1995: 111-113, 123, 105-107). Many of the sieidi are large erratic boulders that command the surrounding landscape. Seven Finnish rock paintings are similarly located on such boulders, often identical in terms of shape, size and location. Much more commonly, the rock paintings are located on steep cliffs rising from water's edge. Cliffs such as these are not particularly common locations for sieidi, but some do exist. The cliff of Taatsinkirkko ('The Church of Taatsi') in Kittilä, Finnish Lapland, is a prime example: a steep cliff rising directly from

the water, no different from the typical rock painting site except for the fact that it does not feature painted figures (fig. 7). A similar cliff called Algažjaurpáht is described by Itkonen (1948: 320) as having been considered particularly powerful by the Skolt Saami, who believed that it was inhabited by the people of the underworld (*mádd-vuolažou'mo*). These were said to be awake during the nights, and on a still summer night one could hear them talking inside the cliff. Making noise while passing the cliff by water was strictly forbidden and, having passed the sacred rock, a sip of alcohol was drunk in honour of the sieidi. If neglected, the cliff could take revenge by raising a snowstorm.

There is some indication that cliffs rising from a lakeshore may have been considered sacred at least partly because of an anomalous 'soundscape', such as an exceptional echo. In the early 20th century, an informant told the ethnographer Samuli Paulaharju that sacrifices



Fig. 7. *The sieidi of Taatsinkirkko, Finnish Lapland. Photo taken by Samuli Paulaharju in 1920 (Finnish National Board of Antiquities).*

were made and ‘sieidi-prayers’ sung at the sieidi of Taatsinkirkko because of the echo: “Water runs and drops there and echoes, as if someone was preaching. It is like a room ... [The Saami] sang there because the cliff resounded” (Paulaharju 1932: 50, my translation). The idea that an exceptional echo may have affected rock art location cross-culturally has been argued by Waller (2002), who observes that echoing has been personified by numerous cultures and interpreted as emanating from spirits. Waller writes:

Given the propensity of ancient cultures for attributing echoes to spirits, it follows that the actual rock surfaces that produce echoes would have been considered dwelling places for those spirits. It is reasonable to theorize that locations with such echoing surfaces would have therefore been considered sacred. Typical sound-reflecting locations include caves, canyons, cliff faces, outcroppings and large boulders – precisely the characteristic locations where rock art is found. (Waller 2002: 12)

It is not difficult to see how a notion of spirits living inside the lakeshore cliffs could have arisen in the case of both the sieidi and the rock paintings, as steep, high cliffs at water’s edge sometimes produce startling echoes and an ‘eerie’ atmosphere. This feature of Finnish rock paintings was first noted by the musicologist Iégor Reznikoff (1995), who conducted some simple tests in an attempt to prove that echoing is an element that influences their location. In the light of Saami ethnography and the possible cross-cultural significance of echoing the idea clearly seems worth exploring.

Sacrifices at sieidi

When a Saami embarked on a hunting or fishing trip, he would first visit a sieidi, for example to promise to it something in return for the catch. In exchange for good hunting luck, the sieidi would be given small offerings. For example, fish sieidi were given fish heads



Fig. 8. Saami worshipping a stone sieidi (stor-junkare) and consuming a sacrificial meal. Note the anthropomorphic shape of the rock and the reindeer antlers in the foreground. An engraving by Bernard Picart from *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*, Amsterdam, 1723-37. Photo: Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

or sometimes entire fish, and the rock was smeared with fish fat. Sieidi associated with domestic reindeer were promised reindeer antlers, skulls and bones. Entire animals were sometimes sacrificed to the wild reindeer sieidi, and afterwards the rock was smeared with the blood of the sacrificial reindeer. Hunters of other kinds of prey offered bones of a bear, wolf or wolverine, sometimes also birds and eggs (Paulaharju 1932: 10-11, Itkonen 1948: 318). The linguist Frans Äimä, who studied the Lake Inari Saami in Finnish Lapland, has given a most interesting description of their customs and beliefs related to the sieidi (Äimä 1903). He writes that

“Sacrificing” took place so that the meat and fish – the best quality available – were taken to a sacrificial site, where they were cooked and eaten. “The rationale was”, said one informant, “that the god is also fed when the sacrificers eat”. For this reason, “no matter how much people ate, they would always return hungry from the sacrificial site”. (Äimä 1903: 115, my translation)

Furthermore, certain sieidi were offered coins, brooches, arrow points and other small items, but these were usually given for some other reason than gaining hunting luck (Itkonen 1948: 318). Ernst Manker (1957, table 3) lists the types of material associated with Saami sacrificial sites as follows (in a decreasing order of frequency): reindeer antlers, reindeer bones, other mammalian bones (bear, dog, cat and domestic animals), fish and birds, tobacco and alcohol, tools, arrow points, metals (bronze, iron, tin, copper, silver), glass, textiles and some finds of flint, quartz and similar stone material. An interesting detail is the discovery of some pieces of prehistoric asbestos-tempered pottery in stratified contexts (Manker 1957: 50-51). Manker also mentions small, strangely-shaped ‘*seite*-stones’ as a characteristic find from Saami sacrificial sites. As an example, two such stones were found among silver coins, arrow points, jewellery and a layer of partially disintegrated reindeer antlers at the Early Medieval Saami sacrificial site of Rautasjaure – a rocky cliff on a lakeshore in Swedish Lapland, excavated by Gustaf Hallström in 1909 (Manker 1957: 134-138). A rich oral tradition and fresh sacrifices of antlers were associated with the site still in Hallström’s time.

Manker’s list could be continued. But based on the historical sources and excavated sacred sites, the essential core of a “Saami sacrificial cult” – if such a generalization, covering all the various Saami groups, can be considered meaningful – would seem to consist of sacrificial meals, reindeer antlers, reindeer bones and fish heads or entrails. Most of the remaining categories seem rather

peripheral, but two stand out as apparently having special significance: arrow points and prestige objects, including coins and jewellery, mainly dated between the 11th and 14th centuries AD (Zachrisson 1984).

Sacrifices at rock paintings?

Like the sieidi, the Finnish rock paintings appear to have been associated with a sacrificial cult. It would be tempting to associate the enigmatic red ochre blotches of Finnish rock art – which have clearly been painted on purpose but feature no recognisable images – with the Saami practice of smearing the sieidi with blood. However, less hypothetical parallels can be drawn based on the concrete material finds from sieidi and rock paintings. Only a few excavations have been conducted at Finnish rock paintings so far, and the number of finds is consequently small. Attributing all of them to a ‘sacrificial cult’ may appear questionable. But while it is true that finds made at rock art sites are not necessarily related to ‘cultic activities’, in Finland the find contexts (underwater or in boulder soils unsuitable for prolonged stay) and types of material found often suggest ritual. The sporadic character of the finds and the small number of excavations make it difficult to generalize or draw conclusions about its nature, but some interesting observations can be made. In particular, the discovery of bones, prestige objects, arrow points and signs of fire suggest a parallel with Saami sieidi.

Thus far, cervid bones have been found at two Finnish rock paintings. Two mammalian bones were found in underwater excavations at Astuvansalmi (Grönhagen 1994: 8). One is from a large, unidentified, non-human mammal (cervid?), the other a worked piece of wild reindeer antler. From the round part of the antler, once attached to the skull, it could be established that the antler was naturally dropped by the animal. Elk bones belonging to at least two individuals (ages 18-30 months) were found in a test pit made in shallow water in front of the Kotojärvi painting (Ojonen 1973, Fortelius 1980). One of the bones has been radiocarbon-dated to ca. 1300 cal. BC

(Miettinen 2000: 85). Apart from elk bones, the site of Kotojärvi also yielded bird bones belonging to a common goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*, at least two individuals) and woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) (Mannermaa 2003: 6, appendix 3).

Sacrifices of silver, coins and other prestige material from Saami sites may find a parallel in the discovery of amber objects from Astuvansalmi. These were found from the same underwater pit as the bones mentioned above. Three of the amber figurines are anthropomorphic in shape and have a small hole, suggesting that they were worn as pendants or sewn into clothing (Grönhagen 1994). The fourth figurine resembles the head of a bear.

Arrow points have been found at two sites, Astuvansalmi and Saraakallio. The two items found at Astuvansalmi were found in excavations conducted on dry land in front of the paintings (Sarvas 1969). One is a slate point belonging to the Late Neolithic, the other a broken quartz point of the Early Metal Period. The arrow point found at Saraakallio is similarly a fragment of an Early Metal Period straight-based point. Signs of fire have also been encountered at two sites, Kalamaniemi 2 and Valkeisaari, although the dating of the former remains uncertain. The latter, however, merits a separate discussion because it is so far the only site in Finland where a prehistoric cultural layer probably associated with a rock painting has been discovered.

The 'sacrificial deposit' of Valkeisaari

Some of the most interesting finds related to Finnish rock art have been found from a small island called Valkeisaari on Lake Saimaa. In 1966, Keijo Koistinen, an amateur archaeologist from Lappeenranta, discovered a rock painting from a lakeshore cliff on the island and proceeded to investigate its surroundings. At the foot of the painting he discovered a concentration of Early Metal Period pottery sherds (all belonging to a single Textile Ware pot, about a half of which was recovered), two flint flakes and a fragment of a flint object, all surrounded by a layer of sooty soil. Soot scraped from the pottery sherds was recently dated to 3100 ± 50 BP (Hela-1127), or 1370 ± 60 cal

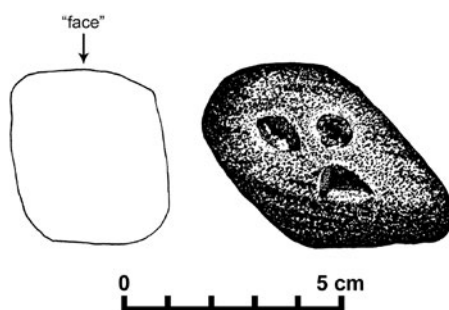


Fig. 9. *The anthropomorphic pebble found at the rock painting of Valkeisaari, apparently originally placed inside a Textile Ware pot. Drawing: Antti Lahelma.*

BC. The finds were made from under a large, flat slab located immediately in front of a rock painting. Among the sherds and sooty soil, he also found a small pebble (size $5.7 \times 3.5 \times 3.7$ cm), which apparently had originally been placed inside the pot. The stone is rounded and smooth, but has three natural depressions that give it a vaguely face-like appearance (fig. 9). It is mentioned in the find report (Huurre 1966), but not in the article later written about the rock painting (Luhó 1968) or any other subsequent publications. However, in the light of the above discussion on anthropomorphism – and given the fact that the stone was found in a closed archaeological context – it emerges as a very exceptional find. The Valkeisaari stone is probably as close as we will ever get to actual proof that anthropomorphism did indeed play a role in the beliefs associated with rock art. This conclusion is supported by the fact that also the painted cliff Valkeisaari is, as already mentioned, one of the more strikingly “face-like” cliffs associated with Finnish rock art (Taavitsainen 1981, fig. 4).

On account of the extraordinary finds made at Valkeisaari, a small excavation was arranged at the site in the summer of 2005 (Lahelma in press). Remains of a fireplace, sooty soil and charcoal were discovered in front of the rock painting, and a cultural layer some 30–50 cm thick was encountered in the entire 10 m² trench excavated. Macrofossils taken from the fireplace included a consider-

able number of carbonized seeds of berries and edible plants, including seeds of fat hen (*Chenopodium album*), a plant species alien to poor soils such as the ones found in Valkeisaari. Finds consisted mainly of quartz, with a few scattered pieces of pottery and burnt bone also found. Upon closer analysis (Manninen 2005), the quartz finds were found to differ clearly from typical dwelling site

material. The most significant difference was that the share of broken or whole implements vs. flakes was very high (58,3%). This seems to indicate that quartz raw material was not worked at Valkeisaari. Instead, quartz tools were brought to the island and used to process some hard material, in the course of which some of the tools were broken and abandoned. Of the very few finds of burnt bone, only one

SACRIFICIAL MATERIAL	Saami sacred sites	Rock paintings	FINDS FROM FINNISH ROCK PAINTINGS: Find site/type/dating/catalogue number(s)
<i>Cervid bones</i>	+	+	Kotojärvi /elk bones (from at least two individuals)/ca. 1300 cal BC/NM 18428:2-4, 6-7, 10 (Astuvansalmi) /unburnt fragment of a large mammal/Stone Age?/NM 26331:4) (Kalamaniemi 2) /fragments of burnt bone (unidentified)/Stone Age?/ NM 31547:1)
<i>Antlers</i>	+	+	Astuvansalmi /fragment of wild reindeer antler (worked)?/NM 26331:5
<i>Birds</i>	+	+	Kotojärvi /bones of common goldeneye and woodcock/ca. 1300 B.C?/NM 18428: 7-8, 10 Valkeisaari /a wing bone of a capercaillie/Early Metal Period (?)/NM 35202
<i>Prestige objects (silver, coins, jewellery, amber)</i>	+	+	Astuvansalmi /three anthropomorphic amber pendants/Subneolithic (Typical Comb Ware?)/NM 25771, 26331: 1-2 Astuvansalmi /bear-shaped (?) amber object/Subneolithic (Typical Comb Ware?)/NM 27146
<i>Arrow points</i>	+	+	Astuvansalmi /slate arrow point (Pyheensilta or Volosovo type)/Late Neolithic/NM 17636: 1 Astuvansalmi /quartz arrow point fragment (straight-based)/Early Metal Period/NM 17636: 2 Saraakallio /porphyrite (?) arrow point fragment (straight-based)/Early Metal Period/NM 21774
<i>Tools</i>	+	+	Valkeisaari /broken and whole quartz implements, mainly scrapers/ Early Metal Period/NM 35202 Valkeisaari /fragment of a flint tool/ Early Metal Period/NM 17040: 3 Saraakallio /fragment of a flint tool (gun flint?)/Historical period?/NM 27906
<i>Quartz, flint</i>	+	+	Valkeisaari /flint and quartz flakes/Early Metal Period/NM 17040: 3, NM 35202 Syrjäsalmi /quartz core and three flakes (?)/Stone Age?/NM 25736: 1-2 Venäinniemi /quartz tool and flakes/Stone Age?/NM 34514:1-2, NM 35465: 1-4 Kalamaniemi 2 /flint and quartz flakes/Stone Age?/NM 31547:2-4)
<i>'Peculiar' or anthropomorphic cobblestones</i>	+	+	Valkeisaari /unworked anthropomorphic stone/Early Metal Period/NM 17040: 2 Astuvansalmi /worked anthropomorphic stone?/NM 26331: 3
<i>Pottery</i>	+	+	Valkeisaari /Textile Ware pottery (ca. ½ of a single vessel)/Early Metal Period/NM 17040: 1
<i>Agricultural products</i>	+	(+)	Valkeisaari /Macrofossil remains of wild berries and edible plants/Early Metal Period/-
<i>Smearing with blood or fat</i>	+	?	(Smearing the rock with red ochre might imitate smearing it with blood)
<i>Non-cervid mammals</i>	+	-	-
<i>Fish</i>	+	-	-
<i>Textiles</i>	+	-	-
<i>Tobacco, alcohol</i>	+	-	-
<i>Metals, glass</i>	+	-	-

Fig. 10. Finds associated with Saami sacred sites and Finnish rock paintings. The data for Saami sacred sites is taken from Manker 1957, table 3. (NM = Finnish National Museum collections).

fragment belonging to a capercaillie (*Tetrao urogallus*) could be identified.

It seems difficult to associate the Valkeisaari finds with purely mundane activities. For one thing, the terrace where the finds were made is very narrow and – because it is littered with huge boulders – unsuitable for dwelling. The finds, moreover, differ markedly from typical material found at Early Metal Period dwelling sites and seem to indicate a specialized function for the site. Combined with the fact that the finds were made directly in front of a rock painting and an “anthropomorphic” cliff, it does not appear too fanciful to associate them with rituals. These rituals may have involved the preparation of food, as indicated by the fireplace, macrofossil remains and burnt bones. This suggests a comparison with the sacrificial meals arranged at the Saami sieidi (cf. fig. 8).

Although perhaps the most interesting find of its kind, the Valkeisaari stone is not unique. A piece of sandstone with the rough appearance of a human head was found in the underwater excavations of Astuvansalmi (Grönhagen 1994). According to the excavator (Juhani Grönhagen pers. comm), the stone (size 4.2 x 3.2 x 3.9 cm) is mostly natural but seems to have been worked around the ‘neck’. A third interesting stone, best described as a ‘portable rock painting’, should also be mentioned here, even though it is not anthropomorphic in shape and was not found at a rock painting. The smooth, round granodiorite cobble (size 16 x 12 x 11 cm) was found in 1979 at the large Comb Ware dwelling site of Nästinristi in South-Western Finland, dated to ca. 3300-2600 BC (Väkeväinen 1982). The stone, which bears an abstract net-figure painted with red ochre, lay buried in sand at a depth of ca. 30 cm. No structures were associated with the stone, but red ochre graves were found at a distance of ca. 10 m from it. All three stones may be compared to the portable sieidi of the Saami – cultic items that could be carried on migrations from one dwelling site to another, or serve as the focal point of the cult at a sacred site.

The Finnish rock paintings in a wider perspective

Within the scope of this paper, it is not possible to present a proper discussion of parallels for Finnish rock paintings. It is important to point out, however, that the anthropomorphic shape, characteristic ‘sacrificial’ finds (arrow points, bones, signs of fire, etc.) and the location on steep cliffs at water’s edge are by no means unique to Finnish rock paintings. Similar sites can be found in parts of Northern Sweden, Norway and Russia – mainly, it seems, in areas once populated by the Saami or other Finno-Ugric peoples.

The closest parallels to the Finnish sites can be found in Swedish Norrland, where hunter-gatherer rock paintings depict elks, humans and geometric symbols in various combinations (Kivikäs 2003). Anders Fandén (2001:100-106), who interprets the paintings in the light of Saami religion, has presented a number of possible examples of anthropomorphic shapes at Swedish rock painting sites, including the paintings of Botilstenen, Trolltjärn, Hästskotjärn and Fångsjön. Two recently excavated sites, Flatruet and Högberget, have produced interesting information concerning the activities associated with rock paintings. Excavations conducted in 2003 at the painting of Flatruet yielded three even-based stone arrow points, dated to ca. 3000-4000 years ago (Hansson 2006). Radiocarbon dates from layers of charcoal at the site extended from 4000 BC to 1200 AD. Traces of fireplaces apparently associated with rock art were found also at Högberget, where radiocarbon dates taken from the charcoal associated with fireplaces range between 4300 and 1000 cal BC (Lindgren 2004: 30-31).

In Norway, Tore Slinning (2002: 130-131) has identified examples of anthropomorphism at some of the rock painting sites in Telemark. Archaeological material from the Norwegian painting sites includes the finds from the cave of Solsemhula, which was excavated in 1912-13 (Sognnes 1982). Finds made close to the cave paintings consisted of a large amount of shells, charcoal and bones, including fish,

birds and mammals (even some belonging to human beings), and some artefacts such as a slate point, a bone point and a bird figure. The deposit is not necessarily related to rituals or rock paintings, but the finds do differ markedly from contemporary dwelling sites. The Solsemhula finds are dated to the transition between the Stone and Bronze Ages (Sognnes 1982: 111). More recently, small excavations conducted at the rock painting of Ruksesbákti in Finnmark have produced evidence of fires kept at the foot of the painting, as well as a number of lithic finds such as scrapers (Hebba Helberg 2004). Datings made from charcoal found at Ruksesbákti, like those at Flatruet, range from the Stone Age to the Medieval period.

Finally, even though they lie geographically far away from Finland, the rock paintings of the Ural mountains in Russia should be mentioned because of their phenomenological similarity to Finnish sites and an apparent Finno-Ugric connection (Chernechov 1964, 1971, Shirokov *et al.* 2000). Approximately seventy rock art sites are known from the banks of various rivers in the Urals, featuring red ochre paintings that mainly depict geometric forms, cervids, birds and human figures. Some excavations have been conducted at the paintings. Among the most interesting finds are those from the site of Pisanech, River Neyva, where bones of large animals (including elk and bear), six bone arrow points and a flint scraper were found, associated with layers of charcoal and ash (Shirokov *et al.* 2000: 7). Some of the Ural sites appear to be anthropomorphic in shape, although this aspect is not emphasised by the Russian scholars. The important painting of Dvuglaznyi Kamen, also on River Neyva, seems particularly interesting. Chernechov (1971: 25) notes that its name (“two-eyed rock”) probably derives from the shape of the rock, which features two small depressions resembling human eyes. A photograph of the site, with the ‘eyes’ clearly shown, is published in Shirokov *et al.* 2000 (fig. 10).

Discussion

Even a superficial review of prehistoric art confirms Guthrie’s claim of the universality of anthropomorphism, as well as its deep roots in the history of human evolution. Indeed, some of the earliest known finds of paleoart feature examples of anthropomorphism. A reddish-brown jasperite cobble found in Makapansgat cave in South Africa in a layer associated with australopithecine remains bears natural markings that appear to form the eyes and mouth of a humanoid (Bednarik 2003: 97, fig. 22). The stone was carried to the cave of Makapansgat by an australopithecine or a very early hominid ca. 2-3 million years ago, probably because its finder was fascinated by the anthropomorphic shape of the stone. Although the Makapansgat cobble is by far the oldest such find, other similar objects also of considerable age have been found. A natural stone object found in Middle Achelean layers in Tan-Tan (Morocco) is reminiscent of a human being in frontal posture, with a few groove markings that emphasize the resemblance (Bednarik 2003: 96, fig. 20). A somewhat similar find is known from another Achelean site at Berekhat Ram (Israel), where a basaltic tuff pebble (dated between 233 000 and 470 000 BP) resembling a female torso was found (Bednarik 2003: 93, fig. 14). As with the ‘figurine’ of Tan-Tan, the anthropomorphic shape of the pebble has been artificially emphasized by hominids.

Much younger finds of Upper Palaeolithic cave art also feature several examples of anthropomorphism. One of the most striking features of Upper Palaeolithic cave art is the use of natural features in the rock, incorporating them as part of the images. Almost every European painted cave includes examples of this, and while the images thus conceived usually portray animals, anthropomorphic images are also present. For example, at the cave of Le Portel, a protuberance in the cave wall forms the penis of a human figure that has been sketched around the rock formation (Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998: 86). More interesting

from our point of view are rock formations that have been turned into anthropomorphs simply by the additions of painted eyes or other facial features. Famous examples of this are known from the cave of Altamira in Spain, where in one of the deepest passages visitors are confronted by two natural stone reliefs that have painted eyes. Similar ‘stone men’, sometimes referred to as ‘masks’ in the literature on cave art, are known from the caves of Gargas, Le Tuc-d’Audoubert, and Les Trois-Frères (Clottes & Lewis-Williams 1998: 90-91).

Apart from paleoart, examples of anthropomorphism can be found in the most varied kinds of prehistoric material. To give just two examples, anthropomorphic elements are present in iron furnaces in parts of Africa (Barndon 2004) and in many different kinds of pottery, such as the famous Moche pots of pre-Hispanic Peru (Donnan 1978) or contemporary pottery made by the Mafa and Bulahay of Cameroon (David, Sterner & Gavua 1988). Given these and other occurrences of anthropomorphism in a prehistoric context, the phenomenon should be given serious consideration by archaeologists. For the understanding of Finnish rock art it certainly seems significant.

Reconsidering “animism”

As mentioned in the introduction, there appears to be a connection between anthropomorphism and animism. The case of human-like rocks is interesting in this respect, because the notion of human-like rocks that ‘behave’ in human-like ways is a religious phenomenon with an extremely wide geographical distribution. Rocks have been perceived to be alive by numerous peoples living on all continents, including the Saami, the Ojibwa of North America (Hallowell 1960) and the Nayaka of South India (Bird-David 1999), to mention but a few examples.

The French anthropologist Pascal Boyer (1998, 1999) argues that because certain elements of religious ideas repeat themselves cross-culturally – in ways that cannot be explained solely by diffusion, ecological, economical or similar factors – they must be based on elements of cognition shared

by all humans. Religious phenomena cannot vary infinitely, but must adapt the general constraints of human cognition, which has evolved to solve specific problems related to our survival as a species. In Boyer’s view, religious ideas are borne out of observations of phenomena that run counter to our intuitive expectations concerning their ‘natural’ behaviour. For example, trees and stones that move in ways that imply agency violate our intuitive ontological categories. Anthropomorphic rocks, similarly, could be seen to constitute a violation of categories since we are (according to Guthrie 1993) biologically conditioned to attribute agency to such objects – and yet we can simultaneously recognise them as “mere stones”.

According to Boyer, humans have a tendency to group these kinds of “counter-intuitive” phenomena into the domain of religion (Boyer 1999: 59). Boyer, moreover, maintains that beliefs based on such observations are adopted more easily and transmitted more effectively because they are more easily remembered. For example, the notion of stones that are alive and can be communicated with is attention-grabbing, but only against a background of expectations concerning the natural qualities and ‘behaviour’ of stones. It is attention-grabbing because we do not generally assume that stones are animate or that it would be possible to have meaningful discussions with them. However, personal experience to the contrary can convince us otherwise. Hallowell (1960: 25), for example, writes of the Ojibwa relation to stones that they “do not perceive stones, in general, as animate, any more than we do. The crucial test is experience. Is there any personal testimony available?” The Ojibwa asserted to Hallowell that some stones have been seen to move or manifest other animate properties. Therefore, some stones were thought to be alive – but not all.

The sieidi are a case in point, belonging as it were to two ontological categories: although made of stone, in many respects the sieidi were like human beings. They could, for example, sing, move on their own accord, laugh at an unlucky fisherman, or shout in a loud voice

(Paulaharju 1932: 22, 27). If a sacrificial meal was arranged at a sieidi, the stone was thought to eat together with the sacrificers (Äimä 1903: 115). If a sieidi was offended, it could become angry or vengeful. Conversely, if it was not viewed as beneficial or acted in a harmful way, it could be punished or even killed by burning or otherwise breaking the stone. Sometimes a sieidi could manifest itself by assuming a human shape. Some sieidi even had families – groups of stones that were viewed as father, mother, son or daughter. To borrow a term used by Hallowell (1960), the sieidi were viewed as “other-than-human persons” – animate, human-like beings that could be communicated with.

These human-like aspects of the sieidi have in traditional research on Saami religion generally been attributed to animism (e.g. Karsten 1952, Manker 1957). Animism is a term that, like other ‘classic’ concepts of 19th century anthropology (such as shamanism, fetishism and totemism), has received somewhat differing definitions and a fair amount of bad press over time. Developed by the English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1871), the concept of animism has been used to denote the ‘earliest’ period of magico-religious thinking. Tylor defined animism as a belief that animals, plants and inanimate objects all had souls, and attributed this phenomenon to dream experiences where people commonly feel as if they existed independent of their bodies. For Tylor, animism represented ‘stone age religion’ which still survived among some of the ‘runder tribes’ encountered by the British in places like Africa or South India. Until recently, the concept of animism has been out of favour in anthropological literature because of its liberal use in the past to brand different systems of belief as primitive superstition. In the past few years, several authors, including Nurit Bird-David (1999), Tim Ingold (2000), Vesa-Pekka Herva (2004) and Graham Harvey (2005), have shown renewed interest in animism. Their view of animism, however, differs significantly from the traditional definition. Indeed, Harvey (2005: xi) makes a strong distinction between what he calls the ‘old

animism’, burdened by colonial and Cartesian underpinnings, and the ‘new animism’ of Hallowell, Bird-David and other contemporary scholars.

Rather than a simple, irrational superstition of attributing life to the lifeless, animism could be seen as a means of maintaining human-environment relations. This view of animism has been advanced particularly by Bird-David (1999), who rejects Guthrie’s theory of animism because it reduces animism into a simple mistake or a failed epistemology. Drawing on current approaches in environment and personhood theories, Bird-David proposes that we replace the more than century-old Tylorian concept of animism in favour of a more sophisticated understanding of animism as ‘relational epistemology’. This epistemology, she writes, “is about knowing the world by focusing primarily on relatedness, from a related point of view, within the shifting horizons of the related viewer” (Bird-David 1999: S69).

Within the objectivist paradigm informing previous attempts to resolve the “animism” problem, it is hard to make sense of people’s “talking with” things, or singing, dancing, or socializing in other ways for which “talking” is used here as a shorthand. [...] “Talking with” stands for attentiveness to variances and invariances in behavior and response of things in states of relatedness and for getting to know such things as they change through the vicissitudes over time of the engagement with them. To “talk with a tree” [...] is to perceive what it does as one acts towards it, being aware concurrently of changes in oneself and the tree. It is expecting a response and responding, growing into mutual responsiveness and, furthermore, possibly into mutual responsibility. (Bird-David 1999: S77)

The concept of relational epistemology certainly seems to describe the Saami attitude towards the sieidi fairly well. Stories told of the sieidi are replete with Saami who “talk with” the stones. Itkonen (1948: 318) provides

an example: hunters of wild reindeer in Inari (Finnish Lapland) customarily inquired of the sieidi of Muddusjärvi what the best direction in which to hunt would be. The hunters named different places; if the stone moved, that would be the place to head for. In all respects, the Saami relationship with the sieidi can be described as a relationship or a contract based on mutual respect and responsibility. If either of them broke the contract, a punishment would follow.

Conclusions: rock painting sites as “stone persons”

The similarities between the Saami sieidi and Finnish rock paintings seem to go beyond mere coincidence. Both are apparently associated with a hunting and fishing economy, similar topographic features, a similar sacrificial cult and anthropomorphic shapes of rock – and their distributions overlap. Beliefs associated with them are therefore likely to coincide. Some of these similarities may be related to universals of human cognition, such as anthropomorphism and counter-intuitive phenomena, while others may indicate a ‘genetic’ connection between the two phenomena. Historical sources mention “Lapps” still living in parts of Central and Eastern Finland in the 16th century AD (Itkonen 1948), and both oral tradition and the occurrence of hundreds of Saami placenames in Southern and Central Finland (Aikio & Aikio 2003) strengthen the hypothesis that Saami groups have populated the Finnish rock art region until fairly recently. A wide temporal gap still exists between prehistoric rock art and the sieidi in Finland where, as noted, the youngest datings associated with rock art are from ca. 1300 cal BC. Elsewhere in Fennoscandia, however, the gap has narrowed considerably as a result of recent research: Medieval rock carvings associated with the Saami have been found in Swedish Lapland (Bayliss-Smith & Mulk 1999, 2001) and, as mentioned above, radiocarbon-dates from the paintings of Flatruet and Ruksesbåkti extend all the way from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. Having said that, the differences

in location and shape between rock paintings and sieidi should warn us against thinking that the latter represent a simple ‘survival’ of the Stone Age beliefs associated with rock paintings.

Taken together, the evidence discussed above seems to indicate that the Finnish rock paintings were associated with an animistic system of beliefs. Unlike shamanism and totemism, animism is not a concept that has been widely employed in interpretations of rock art – perhaps because in its traditional sense it does not really explain very much. In lay use and even in much of scholarly literature, the term “animistic religion” means virtually nothing, but is commonly used as synonym for “religions that do not fit into any other category”. However, like shamanism, the concept of animism is an academic creation, and can be developed and redefined. The ‘new animism’ of Bird-David (1999) and Harvey (2005) – or animism as relational epistemology – arguably makes both the Saami sieidi and aspects of the Finnish rock paintings more approachable and easier to understand.

My aim is not to revive animism as an all-purpose, universal interpretation to hunter-gatherer rock art – a charge that has been made against some uses of ‘shamanism’ in rock art studies (see Francfort & Hamayon 2001). Nor is the aim to replace shamanistic interpretations of Finnish rock art with another “ism” derived from anthropological literature. Animism and shamanism do not contradict each other, and neither of them should be understood as “religions”, even though in popular literature they are sometimes presented as such.

The aim, however, is to demonstrate that in specific cases the concept of animism does appear to have much potential in rock art research. As I have attempted to argue in this paper, Finnish rock paintings are such a case, not least because of the anthropomorphic shapes and other similarities they share with Saami sieidi. Although anthropomorphic shape is probably only one of many reasons that have made a painted rock special, to us it is of special importance because – even without

access to a living religious tradition – it allows us to identify a probable reason why certain painted cliffs may have been perceived as agents. Exceptional echoing, similarly, might reveal one reason for choosing a specific cliff and attributing animacy to it (Waller 2002). But in many other cases, the reasons – dreams, visions and strange incidents – will remain forever lost to us.

This interpretation of the painted cliffs as “persons” is very different from the traditional view of the rock as a passive medium for artistic expression or passing information. Not only does the site of the paintings appear to reflect cosmological symbolism (Lahelma 2005), it may have been viewed as alive, conscious of one’s actions towards it, and powerful. The rock may have been “talked with” and viewed as a potent actor in questions of subsistence and other important issues. Material evidence for such beliefs is provided, most importantly, by the finds associated with the Valkeisaari painting discussed above. In the light Saami ethnography, the anthropomorphic cliff of Valkeisaari – and probably a number of other similar cliffs as well – can be interpreted as a living “stone person” (*keäd’ge-olmuš*) who, like the sieidi, may have been thought to participate in sacrificial meals. The small anthropomorphic stone found among pottery sherds may be related to the same idea of sharing food with the god. Like similar, strangely-shaped stones sometimes found at Saami sacred sites, the Valkeisaari stone could have represented a concentration of the supernatural power of the site. It may have functioned as the focus of worship and sacrifices – a miniature ‘representative’ of the site as a whole. Perhaps this is why the stone was found inside a ceramic vessel probably used for serving food.

Both the making of rock paintings and the sacrifices apparently made in front of them can be seen as material expressions of ritual communication between humans and the environment. This communication can be interpreted as reflecting the principles of reciprocity and equality with nature, fundamental to the forager way of life. The words of Inga-Maria Mulk (1994: 123), describing

the Saami attitude towards sacred sites, would seem to apply to rock painting sites also:

Offering natural products to the powers of nature may be seen as a symbolic act of giving back nature’s gifts. [...] On an ideological level, such acts will enforce the idea of humans being part of nature, contrary to the idea that their task on earth is to conquer and subordinate nature.

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PAPER IV

Lahelma, A. in press b. Politics, Ethnography and Prehistory: in Search of an ‘Informed’ Approach to Finnish and Karelian Rock Art. *To be published in the proceedings of the South African Conference on Rock Art (SACRA) 12.-17.2.2006, edited by Benjamin Smith, Knut Helskog and David Morris.*

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ANTTI LAHELMA:

Politics, ethnography and prehistory: in search of an ‘informed approach’ to Finnish and Karelian Stone Age rock art

North European Stone Age rock art is commonly thought to lie beyond the reach of ‘informed’ methods, or approaches that draw on such ethnography that is known with good cause to relate to the meaning of rock art. This paper presents evidence that in the case of the rock arts of Finland and Karelia (dated to ca. 5000-1500 BC) an informed approach may nonetheless be possible. Based on a series of small case studies, it is argued that the folklore and pre-Christian beliefs of the Uralic-speaking peoples (in particular Finns, Karelians, Veps and Saami) appear to provide ‘inside information’ concerning the meaning of this art. Even though often rejected in Western archaeology, this approach has been embraced by many Russian archaeologists working with rock art. The second part of the paper discusses the historical and political developments of the two research traditions. The possible socio-political reasons behind their different approaches to the use of ethnography are also considered.

Introduction

In a review of contemporary rock art research, Paul Taçon and Christopher Chippindale (1998) make a useful distinction between two fundamental approaches to the study of rock art: ‘formal methods’, which do not depend on any kind of ethnographic insight, and ‘informed methods’ which draw on

[...] some source of insight passed on directly or indirectly from those who made and used the rock-art – through ethnography, through ethnohistory, through the historical record, or through modern understanding known with good cause to perpetuate ancient knowledge” (Taçon & Chippindale 1998: 6)

In our day, the production of rock art in traditional societies has come to an end almost universally. Access to a living tradition concerning the meaning of rock art has become exceedingly rare, although the Dogon rock paintings of Mali (Kleinitz & Dietz 2006) and some regions of Australia (Layton 1992) can be mentioned as cases where ‘inside information’ is still available. Somewhat more numerous – but nonetheless rare – are direct references to beliefs and practices related to rock art in ethnographic literature. With a few exceptions (such as Reichel-Dolmatoff

1967), such references are limited to short and obscure footnotes, as few early ethnographers or explorers have shown any great interest in the production or meaning of rock art. However, great advances in the study of rock art have been accomplished even with the aid of such fragmentary and elusive material, as exemplified by the work of David Lewis-Williams on the San rock paintings of South Africa (Lewis-Williams 2003, Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004) and David Whitley’s studies on the rock art of south-western United States (Whitley 1998, 2000).

With the exception of Medieval graffiti and other inscriptions of the historical period, this kind of ‘direct’ ethnographic information does not appear to be available for any corpus of rock art in Europe (Chippindale 2000: 70). However, in the definition quoted above, Taçon and Chippindale leave the door open for a third, more speculative kind of ‘informed’ knowledge: insights gained through “modern understanding known with good cause to perpetuate ancient knowledge”. In the Western archaeological tradition (but, as we shall see, less so in Russian archaeology), such insights on North European Stone Age rock art have generally been considered impossible to reach (Chippindale 2000: 76). This has certainly been the case in Finland where, until recently, rock art research has occupied a relatively marginal role in archae-

ology (Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 59-62). In a rare and personal commentary on the subject, the eminent Finnish prehistorian Christian Carpelan complained some years ago that the study of Finnish rock art has been turned into “an abstract play, where arbitrarily chosen romantic stereotypes are presented as interpretative elements, commonly including *Kalevala* [poetry] and Saami shaman drums, the Urals and Siberia” (Carpelan 2000: 8, my translation). He argues that the transition from hunting and fishing to agriculture in effect has created an impenetrable barrier for rock art studies that suggest a link with recent folklore. Instead of such “infertile speculation”, Carpelan thinks it better to limit oneself to studying the “descriptive and aesthetic qualities of the art” (Carpelan 2000: 8). This, in fact, is what most Finnish archaeologists have limited themselves to. The “shamanistic-mythologico-cosmological” interpretations criticized by Carpelan (2000: 2) have by and large been

presented by non-archaeologists: amateurs, folklorists and historians of religion.

But it is interesting to note that the position adopted by Carpelan, common enough among Finnish archaeologists, is starkly contrasted by Russian research, where Finnish and Saami ethnography has been embraced by many archaeologists studying the Karelian rock carvings (e.g. Linevsky 1939, Bryusov 1940, Laushkin 1962, Stolyar 2000). These carvings lie only ca. 200 kilometres east of the Finnish border, they are broadly contemporary with Finnish rock paintings, their cultural context is highly similar and there are many similarities also in style and the range of motifs depicted. The potential routes of investigation should therefore also be similar.

So the two questions I try to examine in this paper are the following: can an ‘informed’ approach to Finnish-Karelian rock art be considered plausible? And if it can, why is this approach considered valid in Russian research

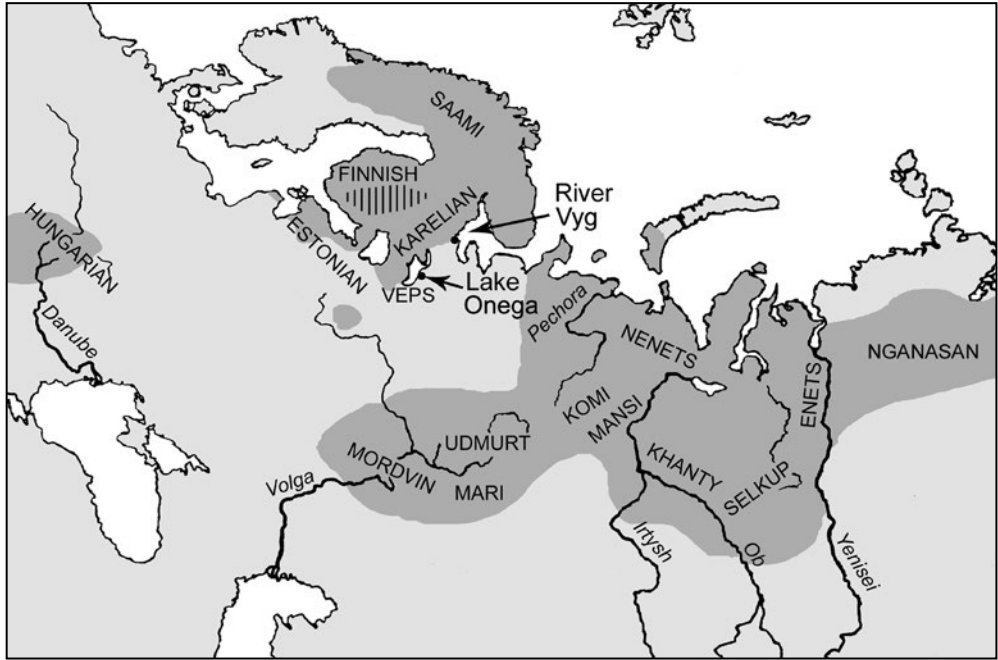


FIGURE 1. *The modern distribution of Uralic languages and the locations of the rock art sites of Lake Onega, River Vyg and the Finnish Lake Region (vertical hatching). Some of the major rivers of the region are also shown (in italics).*

but rejected in Finnish archaeology? With few exceptions (and one must give Carpelan credit for directness), the reasons for endorsing or rejecting this approach are rarely made explicit in either Russian or Finnish research. This lack of self-reflection accompanied by the conflict in interpretations leads me to consider the socio-political context of archaeological research, in particular the different political and ideological experiences that have shaped Russian and Finnish archaeology during the 20th century.

The rock art region and local ethnohistorical sources

Before proceeding to a more theoretical discussion, a brief introduction to the region and its rock art is warranted. The rock arts of Finland and Karelia (see map, fig. 1) are in many respects quite different. To begin with, the Finnish sites consist exclusively of red ochre paintings – no prehistoric carvings have been found (Lahelma 2005). The sites, numbering around one hundred, are generally very small, usually with less than ten identifiable figures. As a rule, the paintings have been made on vertical cliffs located on the lakeshore – a fortunate situation that has made it possible to date the art based on shore displacement chronology. According to present understanding, the paintings were made between 5000 and 1500 BC and are thus likely to have been made by Pit and Comb Ware groups (Seitsonen 2005). The repertoire of this art is very limited, consisting mainly of images of elks, men and boats in different combinations, with some examples of fish, non-cervid mammals and geometric motifs known also. Notably, images of water-birds do not figure prominently, whereas in Karelian rock art they are very common.

By contrast, Karelian rock art consists only of two geographically very limited rock carving regions - Lake Onega and River Vyg - both of them, however, containing many sites with a great number of carvings. The Onega carvings, consisting of a number of different locales along a 20 km long strip of coastline

on the eastern shore of the large Lake Onega (Finn. *Äänisjärvi*), near the mouth of River Vodla (Ravdonikas 1936, Savvateyev 1982, Poikalainen & Ernits 1998). The carvings (altogether 1240) are dominated by images of water-birds, most of which appear to be swans; elks, men and geometric symbols – possibly of the sun and the moon – are also prominent (Poikalainen 2004). The carvings are made on smooth, horizontal outcrops of granite bedrock that still today lie at the edge of the water. Unlike in Finland, post-glacial land uplift is not a major factor in the Lake Onega region, and is consequently of less value in dating rock art. Lobanova (1995) associates the carvings with adjacent Pit and Comb Ware sites dated to ca. 4200-3500 BC – a conclusion that finds additional support in the hydrological history of the lake, comparisons with Pit and Comb Ware pottery decoration and flint figurines, as well as a microerosion dating of one of the Onega figures (Bednarik 1992: 151-152). Pit and Comb Ware groups, which between the 6th and 3rd millennia BC covered a vast area extending from Norwegian Finnmark and Northern Sweden through Finland and Karelia towards the Ural mountains in the east, and as far south as Latvia and Lithuania (Dolukhanov 1996: 76-77). The second important concentration of rock art in Karelia – that of River Vyg (Finn. *Uikujoki*) on the White Sea coast – consists of several locales with more than 2100 carvings, and is in some ways quite similar to the rock arts of Finland and Lake Onega (Ravdonikas 1938, Savvateyev 1970). However, due to constraints of space, the Vyg carvings will not be discussed in this paper.

In spite of their differences, the two Karelian carving sites and the Finnish paintings also share many things in common, including similarities in style, the choice of depicted motifs and, most importantly, an almost identical prehistoric cultural context. The differences mentioned need not indicate major differences in the underlying systems of belief; rather, they point toward a different context for the making and 'use' of rock art. The more 'secret' Finnish sites, located in places that are difficult to access and do not allow for large numbers of

people to congregate, may have been used by religious specialists ('shamans'). By contrast, the generally accessible and open locations of the Karelian sites suggest communal rituals, perhaps of the kind shown in the White Sea carvings, where ritual processions sometimes appear to be depicted (e.g. Savvateyev 1970, fig. 59).

In any attempt at recovering informed knowledge concerning rock art, the ethnographic sources should ideally be local, with as little geographic distance from the object of study as possible. Therefore, rather than use Siberian ethnography (as many have done) in interpreting Fennoscandian rock art, I will concentrate on local sources – the folklore and pre-Christian beliefs of the Finns, Karelians, Veps and Saami. However, the ethnography of Uralic-speakers^a living in Northern Russia and Siberia will also be used as reference material to provide evidence for the ancient (Proto-Uralic?) origin of certain beliefs.

Unlike some of the more easterly Finno-Ugric peoples, the Saami and Baltic Finns have been in contact with and influenced by Christianity since the Viking Age (9th – 11th centuries AD) at least. However, in spite of nominal conversion in the course of the 11th to 14th centuries, it took centuries for Christianity to take deeper root in Finland and Karelia, and many aspects pre-Christian belief survived in the remoter parts of region well into the 19th century. Early historical sources on Finnish-Karelian pre-Christian religion are scarce, but this is compensated by an incredible wealth of folklore material collected mainly in the 19th century. In 1849, these poems were compiled into an epic known as *The Kalevala*. Even though in some respects they obviously reflect the world of 19th century Finnish and Karelian peasants, many of the poems contain thematic material of a much older kind, full of references to ancient Eurasian myths and shamanistic beliefs (Pentikäinen 1999, Siikala 2002a). This makes the poems a difficult but potentially very fruitful source of analogies. However, it should be kept in mind that the book known as *The Kalevala* is the creation of Elias Lönnrot (1802-84), a district physician

and humanist who was instrumental in collecting the poems. Rather than publish the poems as such, Lönnrot edited and processed the material into a work of literature, sometimes even adding verses of his own. Fortunately for the scholar, the authentic folk poems behind the epic have also been published in the fifteen thick volumes of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (1908-48, 1997) or 'Ancient Poems of the Finnish People' (for an anthology of English translations, see Kuusi *et al.* 1977).

Much more commonly (e.g. Helskog 1987, Lahelma 2005), analogies to North European rock art have been sought in the ethnography of the Saami – a people now inhabiting the northernmost parts of Fennoscandia – who retained a hunting-, fishing and reindeer-herding way of life almost until the present day. Some historical sources shed light on Saami religion as early as the 12th century, but the sources proliferate when active missionary work among the Saami commenced in the 17th century (Rydving 1993). Ironically, the accounts of 17th and 18th century missionaries are among the most valuable sources on Saami pre-Christian religion. Yet even this material is, at times, difficult to interpret: different Saami groups held different beliefs, and there are obvious influences from Christian and Old Norse beliefs. To complicate things further, many of the missionaries borrowed from each other's writings without indicating a source and there is an obvious proselytizing agenda in much of the information thus collected (Rydving 1993).

Analogical reasoning in archaeology

Because we cannot directly observe the past, we have to make the assumption that some things in the past were much like some things in the present. Archaeology thus depends on analogical reasoning to a very high degree: whether we like it or not, the use of analogy is inevitable in most archaeological research, beginning from the identification of prehistoric pieces of stone, bone and metal as artefacts with a specific function. Although many different kinds of analogies have been discussed, the

three main types of analogy most commonly distinguished by archaeologists are known as *formal*, *relational* and *direct historical* (Hodder 1982, Wylie 1985, Lewis-Williams 1998, Zvelebil & Jordan 1999, Fahlander 2004). Put briefly, formal analogies rely on a simple resemblance between two situations, whereas relational analogies rest on a cultural or natural connection between the two contexts. These two can be seen as two opposites in a continuum of variation, whereas the direct historical analogy – which rests on the assumption of cultural continuity from the ethnographic present into prehistory – is in fact a form of relational analogy.

Even though most archaeologists (whether consciously or unwittingly) routinely employ ethnographic analogy, many have expressed a discomfort with this dependence on analogy and attempted to break free from its constraints (Orme 1974, Wylie 1985). Most recently, Fahlander (2004) has emphasised the point that because the past is in many respects “unknown” and not necessarily similar to any practices of the contemporary world, basing our models of interpretation upon contemporary, cross-cultural data seems “irrelevant and somewhat unimaginative” (Fahlander 2004: 185). Thus, contrary to the often-expressed idea that analogies widen our interpretative horizons, they might in fact do just the opposite. Fahlander (2004: 188) observes that ethnographic analogies “seem to have a habit of being transformed from illustrations to the status as facts at the same time as they prohibit other, maybe more relevant, models to be explored”. Relational analogies, too, appear problematic to him because the question of what is relevant and what is less so seems difficult to answer: “Is the climate or milieu most important, or is it group size, political organization or level of technology?” (Fahlander 2004: 193). In conclusion, Fahlander rejects all but the most basic forms of analogy (such as those involving the identification of a piece of flint as an “axe”) as more or less irrelevant to understanding the past, especially concerning such issues as social identities, ideologies and cosmologies. These, he claims, are so varied

and complex as to be beyond the reach of analogical inference (Fahlander 2004: 204).

Other than providing inspiration, simple ethnographic parallels may indeed be almost worthless in interpreting complex social phenomena. But as Lewis-Williams (1998) has shown, the problem is not so much with analogy as such, but with finding causal or determining principles that can be used to sift relevant analogs from the mass of irrelevant ethnographic data. Lewis-Williams finds such principles in physiological rather than cultural mechanisms – more precisely, in neuropsychological research on trance experiences. A second, simple but often overlooked solution to the “problem” of ethnographic analogy lies in the ‘direct historical’ approach (which, it would seem, is a close relative of the ‘informed’ approach). The direct historical approach is a term used mainly in North American archaeology, although even there it has been out of favour in the post-World War II era, part because of its association with Darwinian evolutionism, part because of the shift of interest towards generalized, ahistorical processes (Lyman & O’Brien 2001). As with other forms of analogy, Fahlander finds direct historical analogies inherently flawed:

[...] the historical approach is essentially patronizing, viewing indigenous cultures as “cold” and stagnant without social progress or flexibility. From a historical point of view, cultural continuity over a longer period of time-space would in itself be an anomaly [...]. There are no, and have probably never existed any, “cold” or “traditional” societies out of time, which unchanged and unaffected are ticking along like clockworks. (Fahlander 2004: 192)

But there is nothing in the historical approach *per se* that requires us to deny the evolution of cultural forms or the effect of “outside” influences – the view of traditional cultures as existing “out of time” has merely been a prejudice held by some Western scholars. We simply need to assume that certain core

elements of a culture, ideology or cosmology – the slow-moving “deep-bone structures” of the *longue durée* (Braudel 1973) – have remained recognizably similar over extensive periods of time, rather like the basic grammatical structures of a language. The study of such elements back in time could be compared to historical linguistics or, perhaps, to the way analogy with living animals is used in palaeontology.

Fahlander’s second argument against historical analogy – the claim that cultural continuity on a long scale is an anomaly – also appears to be mistaken. As Chippindale (2000: 75) points out, several demonstrated examples of continuity on a scale of several millennia are known to us. An example mentioned by Chippindale is Australia’s Arnhem Land, where the iconography of the ‘Rainbow Serpent’ extends from the ethnographic present at least 4000 years

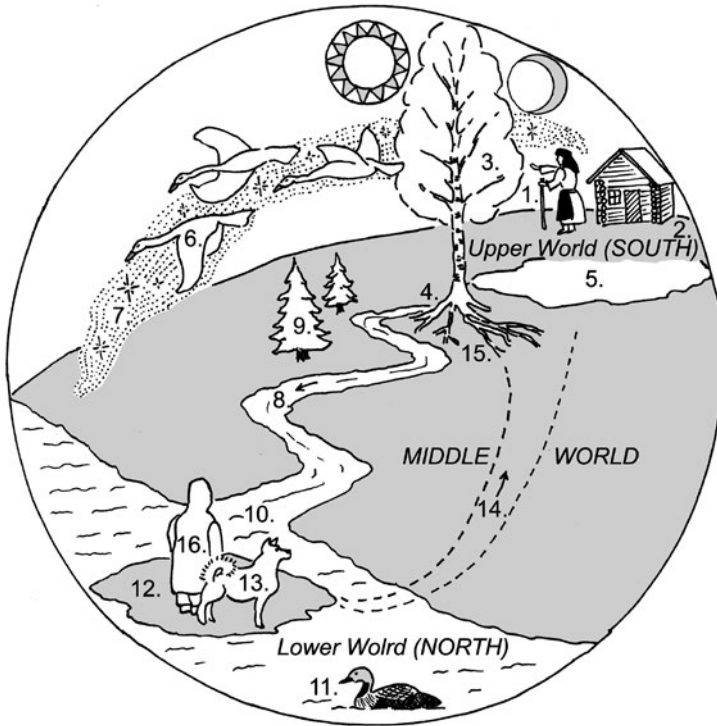


FIGURE 2. *Aspects of Proto-Uralic cosmology according to Vladimir Napolskikh (drawn by Antti Lahelma based on Napolskikh 1992, fig. 1). His detailed reconstruction consists of the following elements: an Upper, Middle and Lower World; 1) The Old Woman of the South (mistress of life, motherhood and water-birds); 2) Her house; 3) The Great Birch-tree of the Heavens; 4) The spring of the World River; 5) Lake or Sea of the Water of Life, where water-birds and human souls are revived; 6) Migratory water-birds (swans, geese and duck) as messengers of the celestial gods and symbolizing human and animal souls; 7) The Milky Way as the ‘Pathway of the Birds’; 8) The World River flowing from south to north; 9) Fir-trees connecting the earth with the heavens; 10) Mouth of the World River and the Icy Sea of the North; 11) Black-throated divers (*Gavia arctica*) as assistant spirits of shamans traveling to the lower world, or associated with evil powers; 12) The Island of the Dead; 13) The Watch-dog of the Lower World; 14) Subterranean River of the Lower World, which flows from north to south; 15) Roots of the Birch-tree of Heavens; 16) Prince of the Lower World, often also the Master of Water.*

back in time. In the same way, stylistically similar images of bighorn sheep in the rock carvings of the Mojave Desert region (USA) date from Late Pleistocene into recent times, and appear related to beliefs concerning rain-making shamanism recorded in the historical period (Whitley 2000: 45). The time span of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, covering a vast expanse of about 25 000 years, is of course even greater (Clottes 2001). And even if it is safe to assume that the meaning of many aspects of this art (as of Mojave Desert and Arnhem Land) is likely to have undergone significant changes in the course of millennia, the indisputable similarities between the Aurignacian cave of Chauvet and Magdalenian sites (such as Lascaux) indicate a degree of continuity in some core beliefs over a staggeringly long period of time.

‘Bridging arguments’ for an informed approach to Finnish-Karelian rock art

In spite of the old view of North European rock art as “entirely prehistoric”, some writers (such as Helskog 1987, Núñez 1995, Zvelebil 1997 and Jordan 2004) have begun to explore the “slim possible window” (Chippindale 2000: 76) of gaining informed knowledge on its meaning through the ethnography and ethnohistory of traditional sub-Arctic hunter-fishermen and reindeer herders. On earlier accounts (Lahelma 2005, in press), I have presented a number of observations in favour of an informed approach to Finnish rock paintings, based primarily on comparisons with Saami shamanism, the cult of sacred rock formations (known as the *sieidi*) and Finnish-Karelian folklore. In particular, the-rianthropic images and pictures of ‘falling’ or ‘diving’ anthropomorphs accompanied by an animal (typically elk, snake or fish) suggest a parallel with the trance experiences of a Saami shaman (*noaidi*) and his use of a deer-shaped soul animal (*sáiva sarva*) and fish- bird- and snake-shaped spirit helper beings (Lahelma 2005: 36-37). A similar group of zoomorphic spirit helpers was believed to assist traditional Finnish ‘shaman-seers’ (*tietäjä*) also

(Siikala 2002a: 234-235). The spirit helpers of the *noaidi* were thought to dwell inside sacred cliffs or boulders which, like the rock paintings, were typically located near water, sometimes involving a natural cavity, anthropomorphic shape or similar ‘anomalous’ features (Lahelma 2005: 37-40). Moreover, both Finnish rock paintings and Saami *sieidi* are associated with a hunting and fishing economy and appear to be linked to a similar sacrificial cult involving sacrificial meals and the depositing of animal (especially cervid) bones (Lahelma in press). This phenomenon of similarly located sacred sites and sacrifices associated with them has a very wide distribution in the Circumpolar region (CAFF 2002).

To be sure, the case of Uralic-speakers and Fennoscandian rock art is arguably one of the strongest candidates for an informed approach in Europe, because it has already been long recognised that the prehistoric sequence of cultures in the region today populated by Uralic-speakers exhibits a striking degree of continuity (Patrushev 1992, Dolukhanov 1996). In particular, the close coinciding of the spread of Subneolithic Pit and Comb Ware cultures (see Dolukhanov 1996, figs. 20 & 22) with the geographic region where Uralic languages are today spoken (fig. 1) has led some scholars to suggest that the Pit and Comb Ware groups spoke the Proto-Uralic language ancestral to all modern Uralic languages (e.g. Carpelan & Parpola 2001). In addition to this archaeological trajectory, Zvelebil (1997) and Jordan (2004) present a number of ‘bridging arguments’ for a direct historical connection between Fennoscandian Stone Age material and the ethnography of Uralic speakers, including similarities in the physical and natural environment (the North European taiga forest zone, dotted with lakes and rivers), in exploited resources, and in adaptive patterns, including strong seasonality and mobility. The same authors also note the relatively low impact of agricultural social systems – a result of the harsh climatic conditions that effectively delayed or prevented a ‘Neolithic revolution’ from occurring in the more northerly latitudes – and the shared elements of ‘Circumpolar

cosmology' common to most Uralic speakers. This last point is worth looking at more closely.

Using the comparative method, several scholars have presented reconstructions of a hypothetical proto-Finno-Ugric or Proto-Uralic mythology and cosmology to accompany the reconstructions of proto-languages (Hoppál 1976, Ajkhenvald *et al.* 1989, Napolskikh 1992, Siikala 2002b). Readers may be more familiar with similar reconstructions of Indo-European mythology proposed by Dumézil (1958). However, in some respects reconstructions of Uralic mythology stand on firmer ground, as many Uralic peoples have retained their traditional religion and a hunting-and-fishing or pastoral way of life until recent history, making it possible to base the Uralic reconstruction on a rich corpus of ethnography (rather than vague references in Classical or Medieval authors). Such reconstructions are, of course, scientific abstractions – comparable to proto-languages or archaeological cultures – and the historical reality underlying them is debatable. But as Napolskikh (1992: 3) writes, if we accept that the linguistic reconstruction known as 'Proto-Uralic' reflects a linguistic unit that once really existed (possibly reflected in the Pit and Comb Ware cultures), it is possible to speak also of a Proto-Uralic people with distinctive cultural traits and mythology. Figure 2 shows the reconstruction proposed by Napolskikh (1992), which combines horizontal and vertical cosmography into a single model of the universe. To this may be added several other aspects of myth and religion, probably also of Proto-Uralic antiquity, discussed by Siikala (2002b). These include cosmogonic myths, where the creation of the world is associated with a water-bird (see below), a tripartite conception of the human soul, the supreme sky-god, astral mythology (especially concerning the Sun and the constellation of the Great Bear), and shamanism. Notably, the Saami word for a shaman, *noiadi*, belongs to the common Finno-Ugric vocabulary with cognates in Finnish (*noita*), Estonian (*nõid*) and Mansi (*ńajt*) (Siikala 2002b: 27).

Uralic bird-mythology and the carvings of Lake Onega

The important role of migratory water-birds in the mythologies of Uralic speakers, reflected in Napolskikh's (1992) reconstruction of Proto-Uralic cosmology, is remarkable. In the traditional religions of Uralic peoples, water-birds were believed to be able to travel between the worlds – a belief manifested in the common Uralic cosmological concept of a 'Land of Birds' (Finn. *lintukoto*), an island located beyond the horizon at the south-western end of the Milky Way. This otherworldly place where migrating birds fly to is known for instance among the Finns, Komi, Khanty and Mansi (Napolskikh 1992). Accordingly, the Milky Way is known as a 'Pathway of the Birds', a name used of the galaxy in most Uralic languages (e.g. Finnish *linnunrata*, Estonian *linnutee*). In a Uralic context, water-birds emerge as symbols of the soul or as ritual messengers between the world of men and that of the gods. For example, in an Udmurt ritual, two swans were caught and sent swimming upstream the River Vyatka to deliver prayers to the Supreme Deity (Napolskikh (1992: 7). If the birds started swimming downstream, this was considered a bad sign. In *Kalevala*-metric poetry, we encounter the Swan of *Tuonela* ('The Land of Death') – made famous by a tone poem composed by Jean Sibelius – a mystical bird swimming in the River of Death. An attempt to kill the swan brought about the doom of *Lemminkäinen*, one of the heroes of poems. As Zvelebil and Jordan (1999: 199) point out, the roots of this symbolism associated with migratory birds seems easy to understand: the arrival of the birds from the south signalled spring and life, and their departure was a sign of autumn and death. It is therefore not surprising to find that several Uralic peoples, including the Nganasan, Enets and Dolgans, have special rites for welcoming migratory ducks and swans in the spring (Napolskikh 1992: 9).

Bird-symbolism is also prominent the material culture of Finno-Ugric peoples, both

modern and prehistoric (Antanaitis 1998). Images of water-birds (probably ducks or swans) occasionally form a part of the decoration of Pit and Comb Ware pots (fig. 3a), and the handles of prehistoric wooden spoons, possibly used in a ritual context, are sometimes carved into the shape of a duck (Carpelan 1977, Immonen 2002). Where organic material has been preserved, bird bones, bird-shaped pendants and objects fashioned out of bird bone are frequently found in Pit and Comb Ware burials (Antanaitis 1998: 63). For example, one of the Early Neolithic burials at Zvejnieki (Latvia) included two complete mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), one in each arm of a young man (Mannermaa in press). Similar bird symbolism is present in Iron Age finds from the Finno-Ugric area, as exempli-

fied by bird-shaped pendants (often found in burials; e.g. fig. 3b), as well as many aspects of recent material culture. As an example, wooden scoops with a duck-shaped handle, similar to the prehistoric finds mentioned above, are known from ethnographic collections in Finland, the Baltic states and Northern Russia (Immonen 2002: 34).

A similar, fundamental symbolic significance attributed to water-birds is evident in the carvings of Lake Onega, where altogether 42% of all the carvings represent water-birds (Poikalainen 2004). At several carving locales, such as those at the mouth of River Vodla (Poikalainen & Ernits 1998), the share of water-birds is even higher (about 60%). Most of these images appear to represent swans, but some ducks and a few cranes are also present.

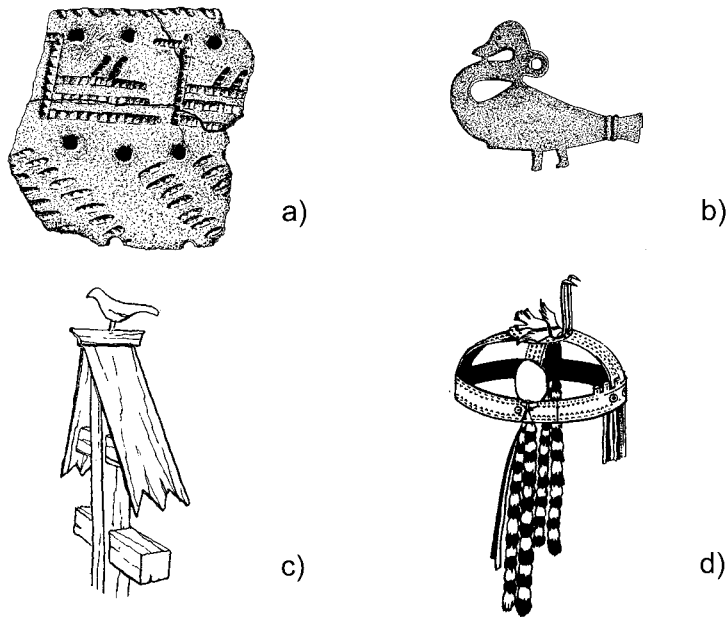


FIGURE 3. Examples of bird-symbolism in 'Uralic' material culture: a) a Typical Comb Ware pottery sherd (NM 28013: 15430-1) decorated with schematic water-birds, Pörrinmökki, Eastern Finland, ca. 4000-3500 BC; b) a Viking Age bronze pendant (NM 8602:74) in the shape of a swan – a grave find from Köyliönsaari, Western Finland, ca. 800-1050 AD; c) a wooden bird sculpture on top of a Greek Orthodox grave cross, Karelia, early 20th century (according to Haavio 1950), e) the ritual headgear of a Nganasan shaman topped by a metal image of a water-bird representing the spirit helper of the shaman (according to Hoppál 2003). Figs. a & b drawn by Antti Lahelma; NM refers to Finnish National Museum collections.

Poikalainen (2000: 252) notes that sometimes these images are positioned on the rock surface so that the head or neck of the bird ‘disappears’ into a crack, and sometimes the bird has no body, only a neck seemingly emerging from a crack (fig. 4a). This suggests the interpretation that at least some of the swans should perhaps be understood as moving between this world and the other, reached through cracks in the rock. Given the above discussion on Finno-Ugric bird-mythology, it seems probable that many of the images of swans at Onega are to be understood as symbols of the soul or as messengers between humans and the spirit world. Swans entering a crack or emerging from one appear to symbolize the passage of the soul (possibly of a deceased person) between this world and the Lower World. As

evidenced by figure 4a, in a few cases elks also look as if they emerge from cracks. Here, as in Finnish rock paintings (Lahelma 2005: 42), the elk may be represent the *alter ego* of a shaman.

This suggestion is substantiated by the fact that beliefs concerning swans and ducks as ‘soul-birds’ can still be found among the Vepsians of the southern Lake Onega region (Vinokurova 2005). In traditional Vepsian laments, the human soul is typically described as a bird; in a marriage keen, for example, the soul of the bride is portrayed as a duck. Swans are called “god’s birds” (Vepsian *jumalanlind*) and taboos exist against killing and eating swans. Wooden bird-sculptures representing the soul of the deceased still adorn Vepsian and Karelian graves at some old cemeteries

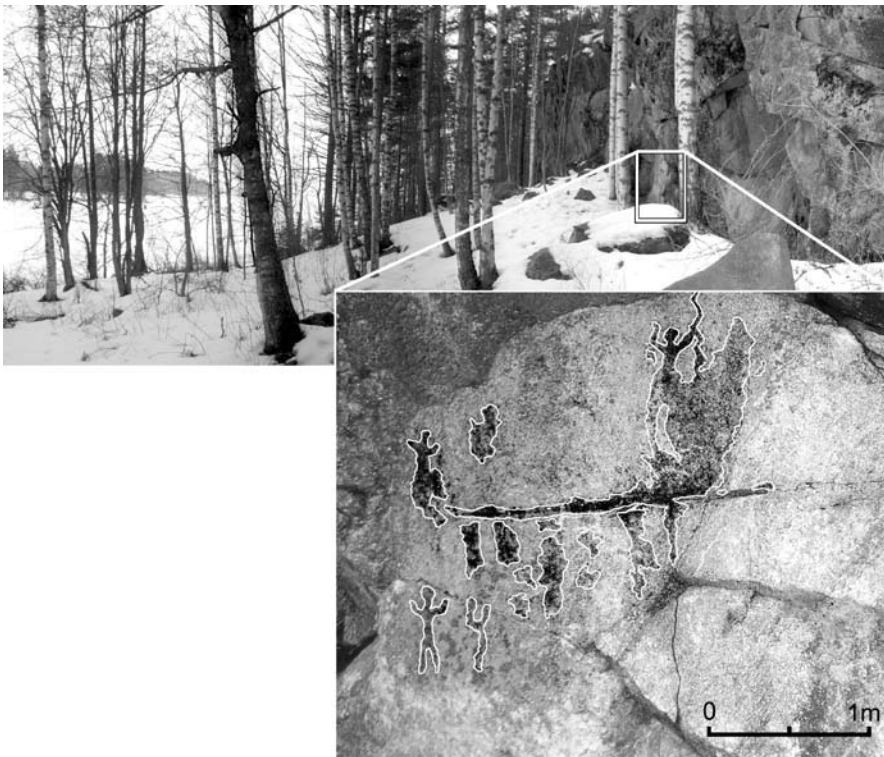


FIGURE 5. The badly weathered rock painting of Salminkallio, Finland, with the rough outlines of the painted area marked in white. The painting includes an anthropomorph holding a zig-zag line (a shaman with an adder-shaped spirit helper?), some unclear vertical lines, human figures and a long horizontal line that closely follows a natural crack in the rock. Photo and photographic manipulation: Antti Lahelma.

(Vinokurova 2005: 148; cf. fig 3c). Similar carved birds, fulfilling a similar function, can be found at Khanty graves (Zvelebil & Jordan 1999, fig. 6.11) more than two thousand kilometres east of Lake Onega.

Entering the rock

The notion of the painted or carved rock face as a ‘membrane’ between the worlds, through which the Otherworld may be reached, is a cross-culturally attested phenomenon (e.g. Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1990, Whitley 1998). Even though positioning rock art in relation to natural cracks in the rock is more common in Karelian rock art, some evidence of a similar concern for cracks exists in Finnish rock art also. One of the best examples is provided by the painting of Salminkallio, made on a heavily fractured lakeshore cliff in Southern Finland. In the painting, some badly weathered human figures (one of them holding a zig-zag line) can be distinguished. However, the most interesting part of this painting is a long (ca. 2.0 m) horizontal line, obviously painted so as to emphasize a crack in the rock face (fig. 5). But apart from these kinds of clues in rock art, do we have evidence for shamans entering the rock in the Finnish-Karelian region? It appears

that we do. A folk poem (one of several variants on the same theme) recorded by D.E.D. Europaeus in 1837 at Akonlahti, north-western Karelia, describes how the main protagonist of *The Kalevala* Väinämöinen

[...] wrote a rune upon the stone,
Drew a line upon the rock
With the stump of his thumb,
With his ring finger:
The stone split into two
The boulder into three parts.
There an adder was drinking beer,
A snake was sipping maltwort
Inside the blue stone,
On the thick boulder’s ridge
(SKVR I, poem 35, lines 12-21; translation according to Siikala 2002a: 190)

He then proceeds to kill the snake, and from the black blood of the animal a huge, fiery oak grows on the spot. According to Siikala (2002a: 189-191), the mythological motifs (the ‘blue stone’, the snake inside the stone, etc.) in the poem are related to an archaic cosmographic tradition, with several parallels in the arctic regions of Northern Eurasia. Thematically, the poem belongs to the most archaic layers of *Kalevala*-metric poetry,



FIGURE 4. Images from Lake Onega: a) Images of swans and an elk emerging from cracks in the bedrock at Cape Lebedinyi (Kochkovnavolok); b) A scene possibly representing the creation of the world from a water-bird’s egg at Bolshoy Guri island, carved inside a dark, egg-shaped rock formation. According to Poikalainen & Ernits (1998). Different scales.

where Väinämöinen (called ‘the eternal sage’ in the poems) is typically portrayed as the archetypal shaman (Haavio 1952).

In the translation above, Väinämöinen is described as ‘writing a rune’ upon the stone, which is slightly misleading. In the Finnish original, the word translated as ‘rune’ is *kirja*, which in modern Finnish means ‘book’ but in the context of *Kalevala*-metric poetry (composed in a primarily non-literate culture) meant ‘a drawing’, ‘a sign’ or something that is decorated (Turunen 1981: 123-124). The verb *kirjoittaa* (modern Finnish ‘to write’) should similarly be translated as ‘to decorate’ or ‘to draw’, meaning that the line could also be understood as indicating that Väinämöinen “drew pictures on the rock”. Thus while the interpretation of the poem as a whole is unclear (and is unlikely to have been fully understood even by its 19th century singers), two details seem significant for the present discussion: 1) making drawings on the rock causes the rock to open for the shaman, and 2) inside the crack he finds a snake. The snake here evidently refers to the Lower World: it can be interpreted simply as a symbol of that *topos*, or as a rival shaman that has assumed the shape of an adder (in the poems the adder commonly occurs as a synonym for a ‘seer’ or a ‘shaman’; Turunen 1981: 154). Put in a different way, the poem may be interpreted as indicating that a Finnish-Karelian shaman could enter the subterranean Otherworld by carving or painting images on the rock.^b

Indeed, the expression used of “falling in trance” (Finn. *langeta loveen*) in Finnish folk poetry can be literally translated as “falling into a crack” (in the ground). The Finnish word *lovi* or “crack” is also present in the name of *Lovetar* or *Louhi*, the female antagonist of the ‘good shaman’ Väinämöinen. *Lovetar*, literally the ‘Mistress of the Crack’, is described as a fearsome crone, the ‘slit-eyed’ and ‘gap-toothed’ ruler of the *Pohjola* or ‘Northland’ – generally interpreted as the Land of the Dead (Siikala 2002a: 155-177). Interestingly, the word *louhi* also has a second meaning in Finnish: it refers to a cliff, bedrock or a rocky place (Turunen 1981: 186).

This association of the Mistress of the Land of the Dead with cracks in the rock recalls the ‘devil’ of Besov Nos (Fig. 6a). The figure is unique in Karelian rock art which, together with its exceptional size (length 2.46 m), indicates that it represented something very out of the ordinary. Its frightening appearance and especially the fact that it is divided into two equally sized halves by a prominent crack in the bedrock suggests that the figure is a probably denizen of the Lower World. It is quite possible, as Konstantin Laushkin (1962: 213-216) has suggested, that we see here a guardian of the entrance to the Lower World, or the ruler of the Land of the Dead – a distant relative of the ‘Mistress of the Crack’. There is no unambiguous indication of the sex of the ‘devil’, but if the crack associated with it was conceived as an entrance, its placement between the legs of the figure could indicate female sexual symbolism. Such symbolism is not uncommon in the ethnography of rock art. For example, among the Native peoples of California, the rock art sites used by male shamans were feminine-gendered places, and the entry of a shaman into the supernatural through a crack in the rock was conceived as a kind of ritual intercourse (Whitley 1998: 18-23).

The creation of the world from an egg

Two main cosmogonic myths, both of them involving water-birds, can be found in the Finnish-Karelian tradition (Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 522-523). In the first version (the ‘diving-bird myth’), common among Arctic peoples, a duck dives to the bottom of the primordial ocean and brings up some mud, from which the earth is created. In the second myth, also with a very wide distribution, the world is created from a bird’s egg. As it is related in epic folk poems (Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 83-92), the ‘bird of the air’ (variously a duck, goose, swallow or eagle) flies over the primordial ocean, searching for an island to nest in. Eventually it spots a hummock in the ocean (or in some variants, the knee of the shaman-hero Väinämöinen) floating in the ocean, and lays its eggs on it.

Some event then causes the eggs fall into water and to break, so that the yolk, the whites of the egg and the fragments of shell form the sky, the earth and the heavenly bodies (Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 88).

Laushkin (1962: 277-281) has proposed that this myth may be depicted in an exceptional composition on the small, rocky island of Bolshoy Guri (fig. 5b). Five figures – two elks, a swan, a cup-mark and a geometric symbol (of the sun?) – have been carved inside a black, oval lava formation in the rock. The swan is exceptional in that its body is neither an outline nor a fully pecked area, but consists of three concentric lines. The swan of Bolshoy Guri thus differs from the mass of water-birds at Lake Onega and entails a different explanation: it may be understood as a ‘cosmic water-bird’ and the cup-mark (rare at Lake Onega) in this context could represent the ‘World Egg’ – a hypothesis strengthened by the fact that the lava formation, inside which the entire composition has been carved, is also egg-shaped. The three concentric lines in the body of the swan may be symbolic of a rainbow and hence of the sky (Laushkin 1962: 279), or they may refer to the three levels of the universe. The accom-

panying solar sign and an elk may represent the sun and the natural world, which emerge from the cosmic egg. It is worth noting, too, that the myth cited above places the creation of the world on a small island (or ‘hummock’) – a reason, perhaps, for making carvings on the island of Bolshoy Guri. Moreover, the shape of the small, smooth, rounded islets of granite at Lake Onega may have evoked the image of egg-shell fragments.

The ‘Christianised’ carvings of Besov Nos

Finally, some aspects of the rock art itself may indicate a continuity of beliefs until relatively recent history. Ravdonikas (1936: 32) tells us that the inhabitants of the eastern shore of Lake Onega (who still in the Middle Ages were mainly Vepsian and Saami) have ‘always’ been aware of the carvings, which have in local legend been surrounded by a malevolent aura. This association with ‘evil’, indicated by the toponym Besov Nos (‘Devil’s Cape’) known already from Medieval sources, may indicate that the Onega carvings were perceived as some kind of a pagan sanctuary still in the Middle Ages. Even more suggestive are the

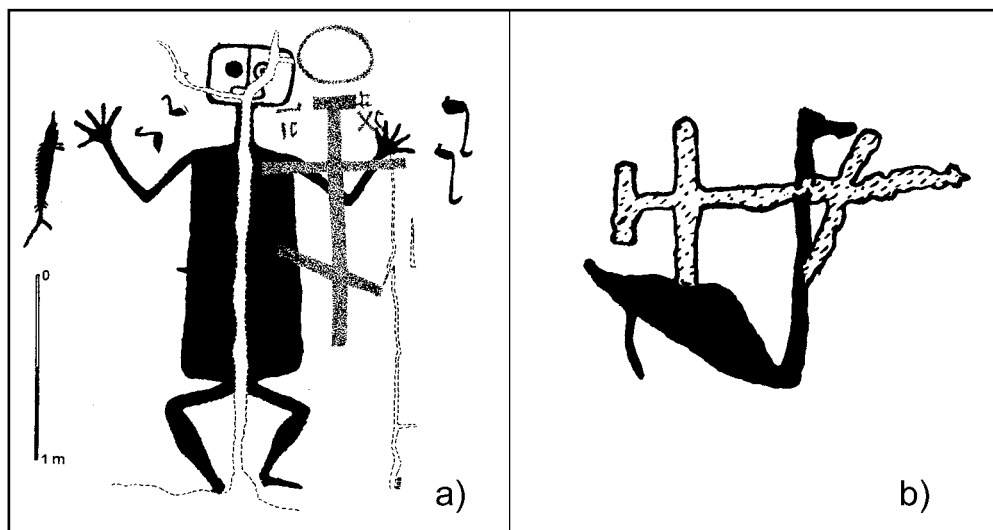


FIGURE 6. The two ‘Christianised’ carvings of Lake Onega: a) the ‘Devil’ of Besov-Nos (Ravdonikas 1936, plate 29), b) a Swan superimposed by a Greek Orthodox cross (Ravdonikas 1936, plate 30). Different scales.

two Christian crosses that have been carved on top of the pre-Christian images. The most impressive image at Lake Onega – the ‘devil’ of Besov Nos – has been ‘baptized’ through the addition of an elaborate Greek Orthodox cross (fig. 6a). One of the swan figures has similarly been ‘Christianised’ by the addition of a cross (fig. 6b).

According to Ravdonikas (1936: 31), these crosses were with all probability made in the Middle Ages (probably in the 14th or 15th century AD) by the monks of the monastery of Muromsk, located some twenty-five kilometres south of the carvings. Constantin Grewingk, who discovered the Onega carvings in the 1848, has recorded the following piece of folklore concerning the petroglyphs:

Once upon a time Bes and Besikha [the Devil and his wife] lived by Lake Onega. They marked their presence there by means of rock images. Then the strong faith came. Crosses were hewn upon the images. The Devil and his wife had to escape. They wanted to take a piece of the rock with them as a reminder of their home. Unfortunately, the Devil fell in the water with this rock and was drowned. (Grewingk 1855: 98; cited in Poikalainen & Ernits 1998)

This simple tale could have had a simple etiological purpose – explaining the strange markings on the rock – but two details in the tale suggest a connection with pre-Christian religion. First, in Vepsian folk belief, many places (forests, rivers, lakes, houses, etc.) had a ‘master’ (*ižand*) and ‘mistress’ (*emag*) (Vinokurova 2005), and even though they have been demonized, the ‘devil and his wife’ at Besov Nos would appear belong to the same category of beings. And second, the tale follows a formula well-known in Finnish folklore, relating the triumph of Christianity over pagan worship: giants or demons (sometimes together with their wives and children) flee from a bishop or the sound of church bells, sailing away on a boulder or a red cliff, in the

process of which they are sometimes drowned (Jauhiainen 1999: 285). Together with the medieval crosses, this tale seems to indicate that some memory of the pre-Christian religious ideas concerning Karelian rock carvings was in fact preserved in local folklore. And if this is so, then it does not seem so incredible to argue that some aspects of *Kalevala*-metric poetry collected in the same region in the 19th century might similarly be related to rock art.^c

But let us now turn to socio-political context of Finnish and Karelian rock art research. It is there, I will argue, that answers can be found to the rather strange fact that the informed approach (and indeed the sub-discipline of rock art research in general) has been overlooked in Finnish archaeology but embraced in Russian research.

Looking back: Finnish archaeology, nationalism and *The Kalevala*

Like elsewhere in Europe (Díaz-Andreu & Champion 1996), scientific archaeology in 19th century Finland grew out of the nationalistic project (Salminen 2003, Fewster 2006). Owing to the fact that between 1809 and 1917, Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, the early histories of Russian and Finnish archaeology shared many things in common. But the Finnish quest of searching for the nation’s roots and an ancient greatness had certain peculiarities, resulting from the fact that Finnish is non-Indo-European language and its linguistic relatives are the small Finno-Ugric peoples living in the Northern Russian taiga. A feeling of “otherness” and the unclear “racial origins” of the Finns were a cause of much concern for Finnish intellectuals, who were being confronted with doubts concerning the Finns’ capability of independently producing high civilization (Fewster 1999: 16).

In the first part of the 19th century, Finnish linguists, artists, ethnographers and archaeologists began to make expeditions to the east – to Karelia and Northern Russia, in search of a primordial Finnishness among Karelians and

other Finno-Ugric peoples (Salminen 2003). The greatest enthusiasm was directed towards collecting and recording traditional epic folk poetry, which was seen to reflect the ancient greatness and creative spirit of the Finnish people, and was intended to prove that Finns deserved a place among the civilized nations of Europe. At least among the more radical intellectuals this was related also to a political goal, achieving full independence from Russia – a goal in which archaeologists were closely involved. As Salminen (2003) has argued, a prehistory was created for the Finno-Ugrians in the same manner (and for the same purpose) as Elias Lönnrot had created *The Kalevala* epic for the Finns.

The enthusiasm aroused by *Kalevala*-metric poetry and the quest for studying the ethnography and beliefs of the eastern Finno-Ugric nations guided the orientation of Finnish archaeology until the Second World War. Given this fact, the almost complete disregard of the Onega carvings by Finnish archaeologists seems puzzling. After all, their discovery (in 1848) took place almost simultaneously with the publication of *The Kalevala* (in 1849), and already in the 1850s the finder of the carvings Constantin Grewingk – a geologist of Baltic German origin – argued that they were made by ancient Finns or Vepsians (Grewingk 1855: 433; cited in Ravdonikas 1936: 10). The Russian scholar Peter Shved (1850; cited in Ravdonikas 1936: 8) claimed, moreover, that they were related to the mythology of the Finns and particularly to the character of Väinämöinen. Yet somehow, in spite of the almost feverish interest in Karelia and all things associated with *The Kalevala*, such ideas never caught wind in Finland.

A number of reasons could be presented as contributing to this neglect, such as the fact that the carvings are technically located in Russia and that the first decent tracings were published only in the 1920's by Burkitt (1925). But such reasons fail to convince: Karelia was seen as a natural part of 'the whole of Finland' (Fewster 1999: 20) and up until the Second World War right-wing nationalists in Finland

cherished the idea of a 'Greater Finland' that would include Karelia and, in some of the wildest dreams, might extend all the way to the Urals. Moreover, in spite of the lack of good documentation, Finnish archaeologists were well aware of the existence and nature of the petroglyphs long before the publications of Burkitt (1925) and Ravdonikas (1936) – this is evidenced by occasional tracings, photographs and passing references in the works of Aspelin (1875: 88, 1877:15, 46) and Tallgren (1920: 54), among others. But even so, up to this date not a single scientific paper appears to have been written on the subject by a Finnish archaeologist (this paper may well be the first). By contrast, more than one hundred papers and several outstanding monographs on Karelian rock art have been written by Russian and Estonian scholars (see e.g. the bibliographies in Savvateyev 1970 and Poikalainen & Ernits 1998).

A more probable reason for the neglect lies in the public demand for such archaeology as could illustrate the 'heroic age' of *Kalevala*. The Onega rock carvings were soon understood to reflect a primitive hunting society, and Aspelin had suggested already in the 1870s that they may be related to the ancestors of the Saami (Aspelin 1877: 15). In the Finnish nationalistic program, the Saami – even though they are the linguistic cousins of Finns – were seen as something of an embarrassment to the Finnish cause because of their nomadic lifestyle. In general, they were considered unimportant to Modern Finland (Fewster 1999: 15-16). In the same way, the Onega carvings were not the kind of ancient greatness that archaeology was supposed to reveal, and *The Kalevala* – as the epitome of 'Iron Age Finnish civilization' – apparently could not be seen as having anything to do with such primitive art.

Because of their role in the Finnish struggle for independence from Russia, Finno-Ugric ethnography, *Kalevala*-metric poetry and Iron Age archaeology came to have definite political connotations associated with 'white' or conservative Finland (Fewster 2006).

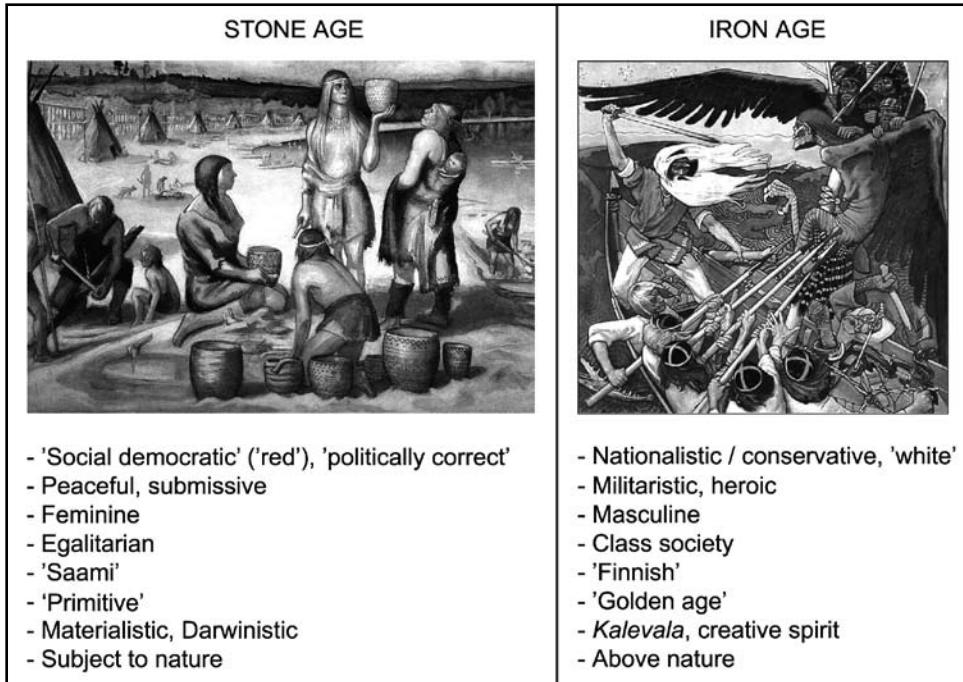


FIGURE 7. Traits viewed as characteristic of the Finnish Stone and Iron Ages in pre-World War II Finnish archaeology, based on Fewster (1999). The image on the left: A Stone Age village (A. Karimo, 1929), and on the right: The defence of the Sampo (A. Gallén-Kallela, 1896).

Consequently, in the aftermath of the Second World War, following the final military defeat of Finland against the Soviet Union in 1944, research on these subjects became a politically sensitive question. Openly expressing pan-Fennougric sentiments came to be viewed as meddling with the internal affairs of Soviet Union, and some aggressively nationalistic books on Finno-Ugric antiquity (such as Kuussaari 1937) were banned. Although a few archaeologists working with the Iron Age (such as Leppäaho 1949) still continued to make reference to *The Kalevala*, this approach soon became unfashionable. According to Derek Fewster (1999: 18-19), post-war Finnish archaeology has moved from an interest in the Iron Age and prehistoric ethnicities towards more 'politically correct' issues, such as the 'neutral' Stone Age research occupied with subsistence strategies and the like. And thus when important discoveries of rock art were made in Finland in the 1960s and 70s,

most Finnish rock art research took a neutral, descriptive character. Their interpretation has been based on generalized models of hunter-gatherer religion, such as an abstract hunting magic (Sarvas 1969, Taavitsainen 1978). When references have been made to ethnography, these have usually been drawn from remote Siberian sources (e.g. Siikala 1981).

Russian and Soviet archaeology: from dogmatic Marxism to ethnographically inspired research

If we now look at how the carvings were approached on the Russian side of the border, they attracted only a very limited amount of interest during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during which the emphasis of Russian archaeology lay in Slavic and Medieval Russian archaeology central to the pan-Slavic movement (Trigger 1989: 210-211, Shnirelman 1996: 221-225). However, the October

revolution created a radical diversion from the mainstream of European archaeology. As one consequence of the adoption of Marxist ideology by Soviet archaeologists, the culture-historical school of archaeology was rejected as ‘bourgeois nationalism’ (Shnirelman 1996: 230-231). Instead, Soviet archaeologists became interested in the social and economic aspects of different prehistoric periods. During the 1930s, the Karelian rock carvings were subject intensively studied in the Soviet Union. A driving force behind this interest was a Soviet emphasis on such research as could help in demonstrating the truth of Marxist theories of social evolution (Trigger 1989: 222-223). Archaeology and rock art were well-suited for this purpose.

It is revealing and hardly a coincidence that both the Onega carvings and the new discoveries of the White Sea were published in two grand monographs by Vladislav Ravdonikas (1936, 1938), the main theorist of Stalinist archaeology and head of the Institute of Material Culture in Leningrad. Ravdonikas’ approach to the interpretation of Karelian rock art was based on orthodox Marxist theory, in which societies progressed from consecutive stages of social development, associated with specific kinds of religious beliefs, towards the highest state of human development – Communism. He interpreted the images as showing evidence of two stages in the development of religion, a “totemistic stage” and a “cosmological stage” (Ravdonikas 1936). There was no real need for him to employ ethnographic analogy: abstract models of unilinear evolution (by Lewis Henry Morgan and Friedrich Engels) provided him all the information he needed (Trigger 1989: 225)

Beginning in the mid-1930’s, the dogmatic form of Marxist archaeology represented by Ravdonikas began to give way to more diverse approaches (Shnirelman 1996: 233, Trigger 1989: 232-233). At the same time, a new sense of patriotism resulted from the victory against Germany. According Trigger (1989: 229-230), this was reflected in archaeology as a growing interest in prehistoric ethnicities.

Already Brysov (1940) had attempted to use *Kalevala*-metric poetry in interpreting Karelian rock art, but the shift towards ethnography in Soviet research was best reflected in the work of Konstantin Laushkin (1962) – a student of Ravdonikas – whose writings initiated a second wave of research on Karelian rock carvings. Laushkin believed that he could identify and read the rock carvings with the aid of *The Kalevala*, much as Champollion had been able to read Egyptian hieroglyphs with the aid of the Greek inscription on the Rosetta stone. Laushkin’s uncritical use of ethnography has been rightly criticized by later Soviet archaeologists (such as Savvateyev 1970), but even his critics usually agree that although Laushkin’s approach was flawed, some of his interpretations are plausible and some degree of ‘direct historical’ analogy may indeed be possible (e.g. Savvateyev 1970: 156, Stolyar 2000: 154, 172). However, what is significant about Laushkin’s work, as well as that of Linvesky (1939), Brysov (1940), Stolyar (2000) and many other Russian scholars working with rock art, is that it reflects a very different attitude towards ethnography than on the Finnish side of the border.

Conclusions: ethnography, politics and the ‘informed’ approach

To conclude, it appears that even as archaeology in the Soviet Union developed from an interest in generalized processes towards ethnographically oriented archaeology, the development in Finland has been exactly the opposite. And just as the ethnographically inspired archaeology (with an emphasis on the Iron Age) of pre-war Finland should be seen as a result of historical and political developments, so should the ‘politically correct’ phase of post-war Finnish archaeology (with an emphasis on the Stone Age). Alas, in both situations, Finnish archaeologists have missed the research potential offered by the Karelian rock carvings: at first because they could not be connected to the nationalistic project, and later because of the dismissal (at least in some

measure due to political reasons) of Finno-Ugric ethnography and folklore in archaeological interpretations.

These developments illustrate the fact that archaeology as a discipline is situated in a social and political context – a truism that should not surprise any archaeologist working within the early 21st century academia (Shanks 2005). The racist archaeology of Nazi Germany, used to justify German expansion towards the east, is a famous example of the alliance of archaeology, ethnography and politics (Arnold 2006) – but this alliance can and does take far more subtle forms. Gro Mandt (1995: 264) has made the important point that uses of historical analogy emphasize temporal continuity in human behaviour: “The past is studied in order to legitimize social relations and institutions in the present”. As Mandt further points out, in many cases analogies are used more or less unconsciously, so that concepts and relations of modern Western society (understood to represent the “natural state of things”) are used to explain prehistoric situations. A reluctance to make use of ethnography, accompanied by the unconscious use of analogy, is therefore just as saturated with ‘political’ implications as a conscious use of ethnography.

Today, the time seems ripe to discuss and re-evaluate the somewhat troubled relationship between Finno-Ugric ethnography, nationalism and archaeology. The case of Finnish-Karelian rock art and *Kalevala*-metric poetry is a good example of the complications, prejudices and historical ballast associated with the uses of ethnography in archaeological interpretations. In the light of the above discussion the prospect of an informed approach to Finnish-Karelian certainly seems promising. Far from being “delusional” (Carpelan 2000: 9), this approach seems to have great potential for interpretation. But without considering the historical background and socio-political aspects of this research tradition, the chances of fully realizing its potential seem rather slim.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have certainly not terminated the political dimension of Finno-Ugric archaeology – far from it. As *The Economist* reported recently (*The dying fish swims in*

water, 20.12.2005), the status of the Finno-Ugric minorities of Russia continues to be a politically sensitive question, and their cultural aspirations are met with deep suspicion by the Russian authorities. But archaeologists should not avoid taking stands in politically loaded questions or be intimidated by such controversies – this would only lead to a marginalization of the discipline. Besides, there can be no return to a politically innocent, “pure” archaeology because it is today obvious that such a thing has never existed. On the contrary, we should embrace the new political situation, as the increasing dialogue between Russian and Western archaeologists also opens possibilities for a new kind of exchange of ideas – hopefully resulting in a more self-aware and critically oriented archaeology.

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a Finnish, Karelian, Veps and Saami are Finno-Ugric languages, unrelated to the Indo-European branch of languages. Together with a number of other Finno-Ugric languages and the Samoyed languages (such as Selkup and Nganasan), these groups form the Uralic family of languages (fig. 1).

b Siikala (2002: 191) does not discuss the possible association with rock art, but sees the stone that is ‘written on’ as a possible reference to an enigmatic group of Iron Age remains known as ‘sword-polishing stones’ – boulders with man-made grooves, the purpose of which remains unknown. However, as some poems also mention an “ornamented mountain” (*kirjovuori*) – an apt description of a Finnish rock painting – an association with rock art seems more probable.

c It has to be mentioned here that studies on the hydrological history of Lake Onega indicate a rapid transgression of possibly as much three meters in the 3rd millennium BC (see the graph in Poikalainen & Ernits 1998: 37). If this observation is correct, many of the carving areas have been submerged by water for a period of time in prehistory. More research is required to securely establish the extent, dating and duration of the transgression. However, according to Stolyar (2000) the production of rock art appears to have continued in spite of the calamity, although the focus of the site appears to have moved to a different locality on slightly higher ground.

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PAPER V



Lahelma, A. 2007. 'On the Back of a Blue Elk': Recent Ethnohistorical Sources and 'Ambiguous' Stone Age Rock art at Pyhänpää, Central Finland. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 40 (2), 113-137.

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‘On the Back of a Blue Elk’: Recent Ethnohistorical Sources and ‘Ambiguous’ Stone Age Rock Art at Pyhänpää, Central Finland

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Three groups of motifs – cervids, boats and human figures – dominate North European hunter-gatherer rock art. The scarcity of explicit narrative scenes makes the interpretation of this art a very difficult task, but important clues can be found in a group of ‘ambiguous’ images, where the said three categories are combined in ‘unrealistic’ ways. In this paper, the prospect of an ethnographically informed approach to their interpretation is explored, using as a case study the rock painting of Pyhänpää (Central Finland) and ethnographic material drawn chiefly from Saami religion and traditional Finnish epic poetry. It is argued that the ambiguous imagery of rock art has a clear counterpart in the pre-Christian religious tradition, where cervids and boats have a similarly ambiguous nature. The painting, which shows an elk, a boat and a human figure merged together, is interpreted as representing the shamanic flight and the sense of co-essence between the shaman and his spirit helper beings. The making of the painting is associated with the belief that such beings lived inside specific rock cliffs and that their power could be obtained through visits to rock art sites.

INTRODUCTION

Rock art associated with prehistoric hunter-gatherers is found in much of Northern Eurasia – in Norway, Northern Sweden, Finland and parts of Northern Russia and Siberia (Fig. 1). But throughout this wide geographic region populated by a broad range of prehistoric cultures, its basic repertoire seems strangely monotonous. Most of the art shows images of elk (*Alces alces*), wild reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), human stick-figures and boats arranged in various combinations. This is a broad generalization, of

course, as we can easily find a degree of regional variation in both the styles used and the choice of the most common animals depicted. For example, at Lake Onega (Poikalainen 2004) water-fowl are more common than elk, and at River Vyg (Savateev 1970) whales figure prominently. Moreover, a range of other images are frequently depicted, including geometric symbols, non-cervid animals and representations of tools. But on the whole, the said three motifs – cervid animals, human figures and boats – by far dominate North European hunter-gatherer rock art (for statistics, see Malmer 1981).



Fig. 1. The location of Pyhänpää and some other sites discussed in the text.

Although traditionally interpreted as being related to hunting and fishing in a rather straightforward manner (e.g. Hallström 1960, Sarvas 1969, Taavitsainen 1978, Mikkelsen 1986), some of these images have seemed difficult to understand in the context of hunting or, more precisely, as an expression of ‘hunting magic’. For example, at the important Swedish site of Nämforsen, actual hunting scenes are never depicted. Instead, we find strange images that do not appear to have anything to do with hunting: two-headed elk, humans merging with elk, elk merging with boats, and so forth (see Figs. 4–10 in Tilley 1991). This ‘strangeness’ led Christopher Tilley to write a book on Nämforsen, titled *Material Culture and Text: the Art of Ambiguity* (1991), which has been hailed as one of the first (and most influential) post-processual approaches to rock art. In this important but controversial book, Tilley interprets the carvings as a ‘text’ that can be read and translated, and attempts to develop a ‘grammar’ for Nämforsen using different viewpoints, including a structuralist and hermeneutic approach. In the conclusion to the book, however, he rejects all ‘totalizing interpretations’ and declares that the art

is of a fundamentally ambiguous nature. According to Tilley (1991:182), ‘the levels of meaning at Nämforsen can be described like an onion with many different surfaces and no essential, irreducible kernel’.

Many archaeologists have found it difficult to agree with Tilley’s conclusion as it seems to advocate a philosophical relativism and deprive the archaeologist of access to any firm ‘meaning’ associated with prehistoric material culture, including rock art (cf. e.g. the comments by various authors to Tilley 1993, and see Janik 1999, Jordan 2004). But in spite of such criticisms, *Material Culture and Text* remains a seminal work – not only for rock art research but for archaeology in general – and many of the issues it raises have not yet been adequately addressed.

The present paper was inspired by Tilley’s book, but makes no pretence of challenging it as a whole. It addresses a single theme that was perhaps inadequately represented in *Material Culture and Text*: the prospect of using ethnohistorical sources in interpreting the art. As Conkey (1997) writes, most of the recent advances in rock art research are related to ethnographic analysis. Tilley, however, devoted only 11 pages (out of 183) of text to the ‘fusing’ horizons of prehistory and ethnohistory (Tilley 1991:126–137), and these 11 pages – with their emphasis on the geographically remote Siberian Evenks and the few available English translations of Russian ethnographic sources (such as Anisimov 1963) – reveal an ignorance of significant Saami and Finnish sources arguably more relevant for interpretation, something that Tilley (1993:111) himself later admitted. It will be argued that the ‘direct historical’ approach adopted in this paper to some extent undermines Tilley’s view of rock art as inherently ambiguous. It offers us a prospect of an ‘insider’s view’ of the art, where some symbols – arranged in specific ways and used in specific contexts – sometimes do have specific meanings. It will be argued, moreover, that Finnish (and by

extension, North European) hunter-gatherer rock art is well suited for this kind of an approach, because of evidence for long-term continuity and cultural stability in local habitation, the relatively late conversion to Christianity and the rich ethnohistorical and folklore sources readily available to the archaeologist who is willing to make the effort of studying them.

In this paper, I will examine Finnish rock paintings – a body of material closely related (but not identical) to the carvings of Nämforsen both in terms of cultural context, dating and choice of depicted motifs. Tilley's choice of Nämforsen as a medium for his theoretical discussion was an ambitious one, but with more than 2000 carvings its size and complexity are overwhelming – a fact that may have contributed to his failure to pin down its meaning. More generally speaking, it can be argued that an undue focus on 'megasites' has distorted our understanding of North European rock art. Nämforsen, Vingen and Alta aside, the fact remains that most North European hunter's rock art sites are small, consisting of a dozen or so images and were completed within a much shorter period of time than the megasites. The case study chosen for this paper is such a site: the rock painting of Pyhänpää on Lake Päijänne (Central Finland), which consists of less than 10 identifiable images. This site will be used to demonstrate one possible approach to the problem of ambiguous imagery consisting of elk, humans and boats in various combinations.

THE ROCK PAINTING OF PYHÄNPÄÄ

Pyhänpää, which might be translated as 'Holyhead', is a wide, rocky peninsula on a lake in the municipality of Kuhmoinen, Central Finland. The peninsula is located approximately in the middle of the north-south-oriented Lake Päijänne, one of the largest lakes (over 1000 km²) in a country that has been dubbed by the tourist industry as the 'land of thousands of lakes'. In 1992, a

rock painting was found in one of the steep waterfront cliffs of Pyhänpää peninsula (Sepänmaa 1997). The finder, Pekka Kivikäs, a retired arts teacher and active rock art researcher, initially noted only a blurred area of red paint. However, four years later, the lichen covering some faint lines adjacent to the blurred area was rubbed off by a group of rock art enthusiasts, revealing an intriguing painting of a large elk or deer together with some boats and human figures (Fig. 2). In addition to this main group, the painting includes remains of other figures – at least one human stick figure, an oblique cross and possibly others – but their identification suffers from poor preservation and therefore will not be discussed here.

In many respects, the painting of Pyhänpää is a typical representative of Finnish rock paintings, both in terms of its location, range of motifs and the relatively small number of images. A little over one hundred prehistoric rock paintings, of which some 80 have identifiable figures, are known today to exist in Finland (Lahelma 2005, Kivikäs 1995). The paintings, which are generally dated to ca. 5000–1500 BC (Seitsonen 2005a), have been made with a red ochre paint on steep rock cliffs (or, sometimes, on large boulders) rising on lakeshores. Images of stick-figure humans, elk and boats comprise approximately 80% of all the motifs of Finnish rock paintings; some representations mainly of fish, birds, snakes and geometric figures are also known.

The paintings of Pyhänpää lie c.9.8–12.5 metres above the present lake surface. Although there is a narrow rock terrace in front of the paintings, some of the paintings cannot be reached from dry land and were probably painted from a boat or the frozen surface of a lake in a period when the level of water was considerably higher than today. This makes it possible to date the painting by the means of shore displacement chronology: like many other Finnish sites, it appears to fall within the Typical Comb Ware period

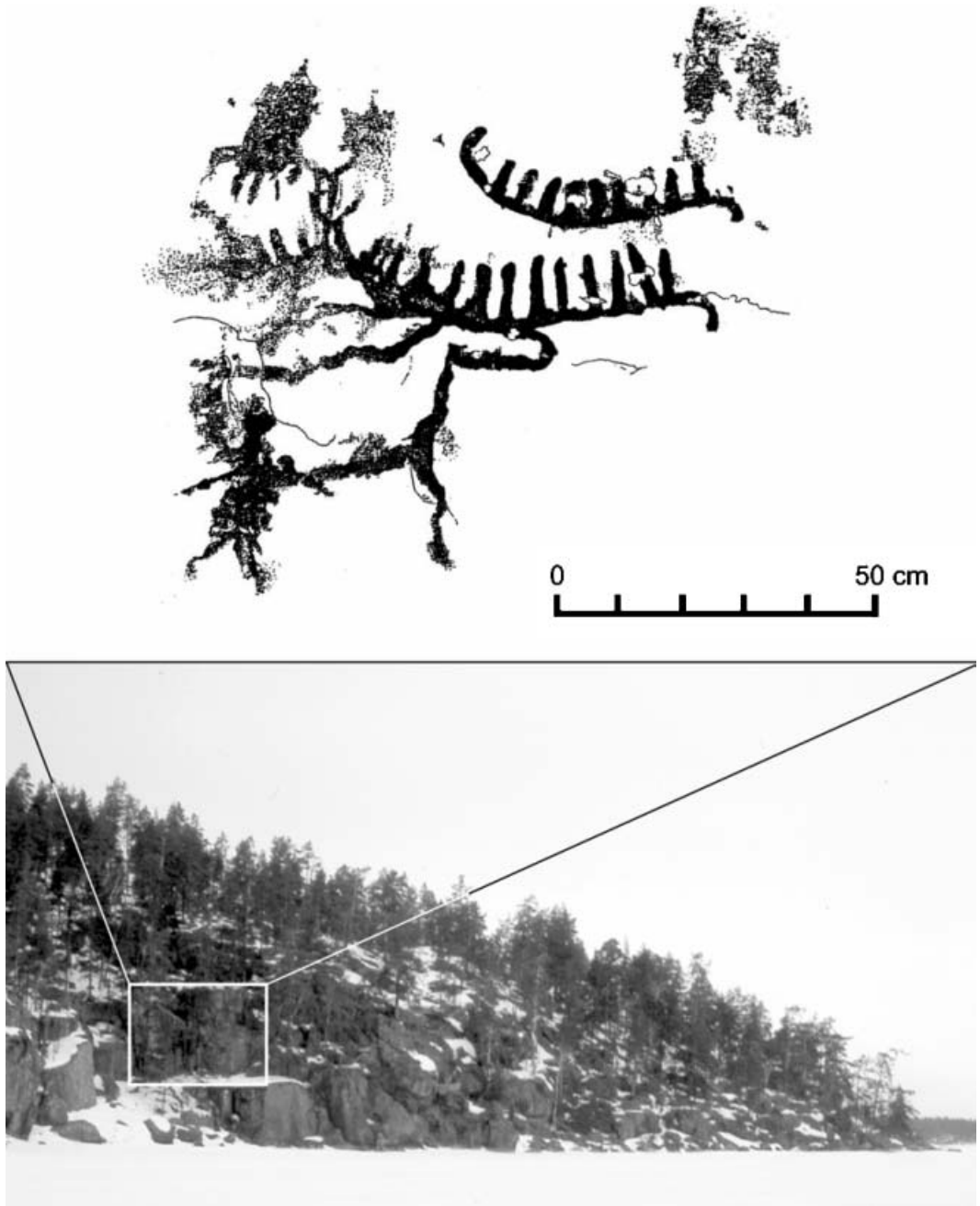


Fig. 2. A drawing by Pekka Kivikäs (2000:97) of the main group of the Pyhänpää painting and a photograph of the Pyhänpää peninsula during winter. The location of the paintings is marked with a white box. Photo: Antti Lahelma.

(4100–3600 BC) and is therefore associated with a hunting-and-fishing culture (Seitsonen 2005b).

What makes the painting of Pyhänpää special, however, is the strange merging of motifs, in which the three most common elements of Finnish rock art form a single image. Whereas in many Finnish rock paintings the figures tend to stand alone, rarely interacting with each other, here a boat is attached to the forehead of the elk – so as to form huge antlers – and the human figure is merged into the rear leg of the elk. Clearly, the image is not realistic. It appears to portray neither an animal of flesh and blood nor a man-made vessel – and yet has *something* to do with both elk and boats. What did the painter of Pyhänpää wish to communicate with this strange amalgamation of images?

'STRANGE' COMBINATIONS OF ELK, HUMANS AND BOATS

The main figure of Pyhänpää is exceptional but not unique for, as Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen observed already three decades ago, similar 'boat-antlered' images have a wide distribution in North Eurasian hunter-gatherer rock art (Taavitsainen 1978). Geographically, the closest parallel to Pyhänpää is found at the rock painting of Astuvansalmi, Eastern Finland, where one of the elk figures is similarly equipped with 'antlers' formed by a boat figure (Fig. 3d). As the images of Finnish rock art are sometimes superimposed, such combinations of elk and boats might be dismissed as unintentional, were it not for the fact that similar figures are known from the rock carvings and paintings of Sweden and Norway also. In Sweden, boat-antlered elk occur at least at Nämforsen (Fig. 3a) and the rock paintings of Åbosjön (Fig. 5b) and Tumlehed (Fig. 3e), whereas in Norway such images can be found at the carvings of Åskollen and Skogerveien (Fig. 3b-c). In all of these examples the boat is clearly

intentionally connected to the head of the elk, making it probable that this is the case in Pyhänpää also.

The presence of boat-antlered elk in rock art led Taavitsainen (1978:191) to suggest that all boat-figures in Finnish rock paintings should in fact be interpreted as elk antlers. This, however, is unlikely to be the case, as some of the figures have features that clearly do not fit into this interpretation. The most obvious examples are boat figures equipped with an elk head in the prow. Such images are particularly common in the broadly contemporary carvings of River Vyg and Lake Onega in Russian Karelia, and occur also in the carvings of Nämforsen and Alta, Norway (Fig. 4). In Finnish rock paintings 'elk-boats' are comparatively rare, but some good examples do exist. A recently discovered rock painting at Patalahti, Lake Päijänne, includes a boat figure with a rather unambiguous elk head figure in the prow (Fig. 4b). Two images at Saraakallio, also on Lake Päijänne, resemble the Patalahti boat in having elk heads (Fig. 4c-d). They are, however, more puzzling in that contrary to other similar images, they also have the legs of an elk. This fantastic element is further accentuated by the fact that one of the Saraakallio elk-boats appears to have two heads. Clearly, then, some of these images are not to be understood as realistic representations of boats equipped with an elk head effigy.

Miettinen (2000:126–127) has noted that images of elk are sometimes also combined with human figures. This is the case in the Pyhänpää painting, where the human is merged with the back leg of the elk, but it is more common to find a human figure positioned near the hind, sometimes extending a hand towards the animal. Because of the rather suggestive position, these images are here referred to as 'bestiality scenes'. Examples of this theme are found in the Finnish rock paintings of Tupavuori (Fig. 5a), Jyrkkävuori, Haukkavuori (Kotojärvi), Vierunvuori, Saraakallio and

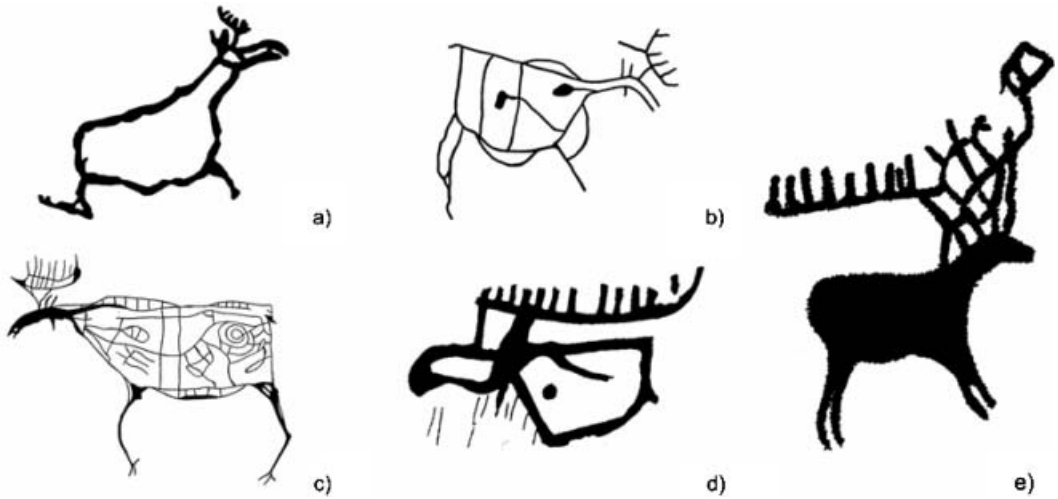


Fig. 3. Examples of 'boat-antlered' elk in North European rock art: (a) Nämforsen, Sweden (Hallström 1960, Plate XIV); (b) Skogerveien, Norway (Engelstad 1934, Plate XLV); (c) Åskollen, Norway (Engelstad 1934, Plate LXII); (d) Astuvansalmi, Finland (Sarvas 1969:20); (e) Tumlehed, Sweden (Nash 2002, Fig. 9.2).

Salmenvuori (Fig. 5d), and occur also at the carvings of Nämforsen (Fig. 5e) and at least two Swedish rock painting sites, at lakes Åbosjön (Fig. 5b) and Skärvången (Kivikäs 2003: 146). Remarkably similar images occur even in the Siberian rock carving site of Tomskaya Pisanicha (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972), where bestiality scenes, elk-boats, horned anthropomorphs, two-headed elk and other images familiar from

North European rock art are represented (Figs. 4h & 5c).

To call these combinations of elk and humans 'bestiality scenes' may appear a little outlandish, for there is usually no clear indication that actual intercourse is being portrayed. Indeed, the painting of Pyhänpää and a well-known image from Nämforsen, in which the human and elk figures are partially merged together (Fig. 5f), suggest that the

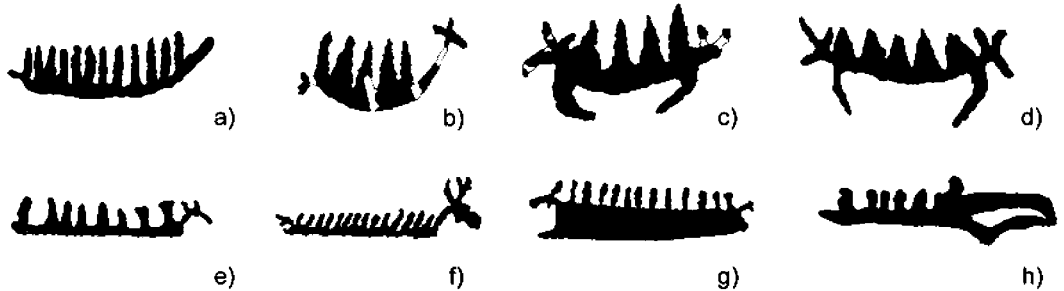


Fig. 4. Some examples of 'boat figures' in Finnish rock paintings (upper row) and North Eurasian rock carvings (lower row): (a) Ruominkapia, Finland (Kivikäs 2000:93); (b) Patalahti, Finland (drawn by A. Lahelma); (c-d) Saraakallio, Finland (drawn by A. Lahelma); (e) Nämforsen, Sweden (Hallström 1960); (f) Lake Onega, Russian Karelia (Savateev 1970:102); (g) River Vyg, Russian Karelia (Savateev 1970:92); (h) Tomskaya Pisanicha, Siberia (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972:230).

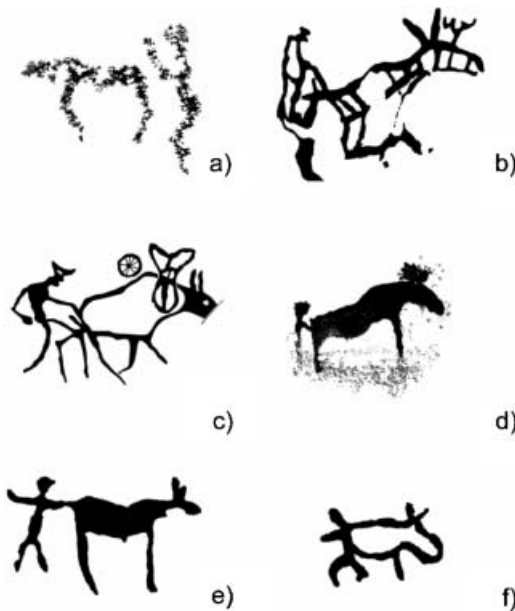


Fig. 5. 'Bestiality scenes', humans touching or standing behind elk, and merging 'elk-humans' in North Eurasian hunters' rock art: (a) Tupavuori, Finland (Miettinen 2000:126); (b) Åbosjön, Sweden (Hallström 1960, Plate IX:B); (c) Tomskaya Pisanicha, Russia (Okladnikov & Martynov 1972:196); (d) Salmenvuori, Finland (Kivikäs 2000:99); (e) Nämforsen, Sweden (Hallström 1960:309); (f) Nämforsen, Sweden (Hallström 1960:309).

union is – rather than carnal or realistic – of a spiritual or 'imaginary' nature. But given the occurrence of indisputable bestiality scenes in later Scandinavian rock art (such as the rock carvings of Sagaholm barrow in Sweden, see Goldhahn 1999), it seems nonetheless possible that this 'spiritual' union was conceptualised using sexual metaphor. I shall return to this question below.

The images discussed above represent only a small, subjectively selected group of pictures from the huge body of North Eurasian hunter-gatherer rock art. However, they seem significant because they appear related, occur over a large geographical area and diverge from the more common, 'realistic' images that typically

offer few clues for interpretation. Moreover, they seem to reflect religious ideas involving elk and boats, preserved in recent ethnography and folklore in the same geographical region. This makes it possible to approach the images through various forms of ethnographic analogy including, it will be argued, a 'direct historical' analogy.

RECENT ETHNOHISTORICAL SOURCES AND STONE AGE ROCK ART

Although different writers have used somewhat varying terminology, analogies are generally understood to fall into three main categories: formal, relational and direct historical (e.g. Wylie 1985, Lewis-Williams 1998, Zvelebil & Jordan 1999, David & Kramer 2001, Cunningham 2003, Fahlander 2004). Formal analogies rely on a simple resemblance between two situations, whereas relational analogies rest on a cultural or natural connection between the two contexts. The last mentioned – the 'direct historical' approach – is a term used mainly in North American archaeology, referring to the method by which one traces the histories of specific peoples backward in time, from the ethnographic present into prehistory and archaeological remains (Steward 1942). Use of the direct historical approach has deep roots in Americanist archaeology, going back at least to the early part of the 20th century. In the post-Second World War era the approach has been less in favour, part because of its association with Darwinian evolutionism, part because of the shift of interest towards generalized, ahistorical processes (Lyman & O'Brien 2001). However, although rejected by New Archaeology, Cunningham (2003:402) notes that the approach is now experiencing something of a come back, perhaps partly because archaeologists 'have begun to work with descendent communities that would like to see archaeology become more historically sensitive'.

The direct historical approach never gained similar foothold in European archaeology,

although the controversial (but nevertheless influential) work of the early 20th-century German archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna (Trigger 1989:165) may be mentioned as one example. It has, however, been widely employed (often inadvertently) in rock art research in many different regions, including South Africa (e.g. Lewis-Williams 2003a), Australia (Layton 1992), Siberia (Devlet 2001, McNeil 2005), the Canadian Shield (Vastokas & Vastokas 1973) and the American South-West (Whitley 2000). In recent years some authors on North European archaeology, such as Helskog (1987; 1988), Núñez (1995), Zvelebil (1997), Schmidt (2000) and Jordan (2004) have entertained similar ideas in interpreting Stone Age remains in the light of North Eurasian ethnography.

Direct historical analogies are often recognised as one of the strongest and most easily defended forms of analogical inference (e.g. Wylie 1985) and as the only technique that allows detailed insights into culturally specific aspects of prehistoric ideologies and rituals (Trigger 1989:342). Recently, Cunningham (2003:401–402) has argued that while historical analogy is logically similar to general analogy, it escapes the dependence on supposed ‘core universals’ of human behaviour, because ‘[t]he transfer of information between source and subject contexts in historical analogy is validated by a homological relationship in the causal structure.’ At the same time, it must be noted that several problems with the approach were identified early on (Lyman & O’Brien 2001:317–319) and the method remains contested by some. Fahlander (2004:192), for example, rejects direct historical analogies because they supposedly promote a view of indigenous cultures as ‘cold’ and stagnant, denying them the prospects of social progress, flexibility or the effects of outside influences. The argument seems misguided, though, as there is nothing in the approach as such that denies the possibility of change, even if it does emphasise continuity and may

create a certain temptation to present explanations that are ‘too direct’. Fahlander also claims that continuity on a scale long enough to be of use in prehistoric archaeology would rarely occur (but see e.g. Chippindale 2000:75 for demonstrated examples of continuity on a scale of several millennia), and that even if examples can be found, the meaning and purpose of social practices would be likely to have changed entirely. But can we assume that change and discontinuity in prehistoric social forms is a norm and continuity an anomaly? I think not. Both continuity and change should be demonstrated, not taken for granted.

It is obvious that direct historical analogies work progressively less well the further back in time we proceed, possibly resulting in misleading interpretations of older archaeological material. This, of course, is an important concern when investigating what Schmidt (2000:220) calls ‘deep prehistory’, that is, human societies temporally very remote from any written sources. In such cases, direct historical analogies may apply only to the slow-moving ‘core’ structures of a society, and even then should be supported by ‘bridging arguments’ that strengthen the case. Zvelebil (1997) and Jordan (2004; see also Zvelebil & Jordan 1999) have presented a number of such arguments for a direct historical interpretation of Fennoscandian Stone Age rock art based on Siberian ethnography, including:

- similarities in the physical and natural environment, in exploited resources, and in adaptive patterns, including strong seasonality and mobility;
- the relatively low impact of agricultural social systems, as a result of the harsh climatic conditions that effectively delayed or prevented a ‘Neolithic revolution’ from occurring in the more northerly latitudes;
- a generalized ‘Circumpolar cosmology’, the basic components of which have been described by Ingold (2000);

- an evident cultural continuity in the same geographical region for an extensive period of time, and a possible Finno-Ugric connection; that is, the prehistoric makers of much of this art may have been the linguistic and possibly also genetic predecessors of modern Finno-Ugric peoples, some of which have practised a hunter-gatherer economy until recent history (see below).

All the above arguments seem valid also in the case of interpreting Finnish rock art. But while the North Russian and Siberian ethnography used by Zvelebil, Jordan and Schmidt has definite utility, it can be argued that out of two apparently relevant ethnographic analogies, the one that is found geographically closer to the object of study is more likely to be significant. I will, therefore, concentrate on Finnish and Karelian folklore and the ethnohistorical sources concerning the Saami (Lapps). My argument consists of three levels of analogy, where direct historical analogies form the main body of argument, but relational analogies drawn from Siberian ethnography are used to strengthen the case, and a few references to San ethnography (formal analogy) are used to illustrate the interpretations reached.

Finns, Karelians and Saami are linguistically related, all of them belonging to the Finno-Ugric language group, but there are considerable cultural and religious differences between these peoples. The Saami, the aboriginal population of northern Fennoscandia, practiced until the 17th century AD (and in some places later) an economy based mainly on hunting, gathering and fishing, and retained their traditional, pre-Christian religion relatively late, falling under intense Lutheran missionary activity only in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries (Rydving 1993). By contrast, agriculture was already introduced in Southern Finland and Karelia¹ by the Late Neolithic, and both Finns and

Karelians were converted to Christianity in the course of the 10th–14th centuries AD. Finns became Catholics and later (in 1527), together with the rest of the Swedish Kingdom, adopted Lutheranism, whereas Karelians fell under Novgorodian rule and became Greek Orthodox.

That Finns, Karelians and Saami can all be seen as 'descendent communities' (to borrow a term used by Cunningham (2003)) of Subneolithic Comb Ware populations is today considered probable by most archaeologists, geneticists and linguists alike (e.g. various authors in Fogelberg 1999 and Pesonen & Westermarck 2003). This view of Finnish prehistory, which became the dominant paradigm in the course of the 1980s, replaced an earlier theory that posited a relatively late (Early Iron Age) migration of Finnish speakers that would have replaced an indigenous Saami population (e.g. Kivikoski 1967). Some critical voices have been raised against the 'continuity theory', as it is known in Finnish archaeology. For example, Fewster (1999) suspects a political motivation behind the post-World War II shift from migration theories towards a notion of 'eternal Finnishness', and Ante and Aslak Aikio (2001) point out that the archaeological continuity does not necessitate a linguistic or 'cultural' continuity as far back as the Subneolithic. Constraints of space do not allow a detailed discussion of the complex arguments for and against the theory, but it should be noted that even its critics tend to agree that in the light of the present knowledge the notion of continuity remains the most likely option (e.g. Aikio & Aikio 2001:14).

The posited archaeological/linguistic continuity in the same region over several millennia is essential to the argument presented here. If communities carry linguistic traits over extended periods of time, they may carry ideological ones as well. There certainly exists a close relationship between myth, cosmology and language (Cook 1980) – a relationship that is plainly brought out by

comparative studies and reconstructions of Indo-European and Finno-Ugric mythologies (e.g. Dumézil 1958, Siikala 2002b). Although the Finnish/Karelian and Saami pre-Christian traditions differ considerably, there is a core of shared cosmological concepts, myths and beliefs – such as those associated with water-birds, bear-ceremonialism and especially shamanism – that point towards a common origin (Holmberg 1927, Napolskikh 1992, Siikala 2002a, b). Linguistic groups can thus be seen as carriers of distinctive mythological and cosmological traditions and institutions over ‘deep time’. Significantly for the argument presented in this paper, the Saami word for a ‘shaman’, *noaidi*, belongs to the oldest stratum of Finno-Ugric vocabulary, with cognates in Finnish (*noita*), Estonian (*nõid*) and as far away in the east as the Western Siberian Mansi language (*ńajt*) (Siikala 2002b:27).

SOME NOTES ON THE SOURCES

The approach outlined above is admittedly vulnerable to many different strands of criticism. Aside from the problem already outlined (approaching ‘deep prehistory’ through ‘direct historical’ analogy), the use of traditional Finnish and Karelian folk poetry as a source of archaeological analogies is similarly stigmatised, as it carries connotations of early 20th-century Finnish nationalism and fringe archaeology and is therefore – regrettably – rarely attempted in modern Finnish archaeology. This poetry, which in 1849 was compiled into a ‘national epic’ known as *The Kalevala*, is a fascinating body of material, full of references to ancient Eurasian myths and cosmology. However, although based on authentic folklore material, it is important to note that in addition to these ancient themes, the epic also reflects the early-19th-century world of the Finnish-Karelian bards as well as the vision and editorial work of its compiler, Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884). *The Kalevala* is thus infested with source-critical problems.

Fortunately, the original sources are preserved in scores of different versions collected by 19th-century folklorists. Although originally a shared Baltic Finnish phenomenon, by the 19th century the epic tradition had all but died out in Finland and most of the poems were thus collected in the remoter parts of Karelia, where the more tolerant stance adopted by the Greek Orthodox Church allowed this archaic poetry to flourish. The poems have been published in numerous thick volumes and been subject to meticulous research since the mid-19th-century (see Pentikäinen 1999, Oinas 1985, Siikala 2002a). Although most of the poems as such are thought to date no earlier than the Late Iron Age, some of the mythic imagery has been claimed to be of much greater antiquity, possibly with Stone Age roots (Siikala 2002b). Still, not everyone is convinced that this makes *Kalevala*-metric poetry relevant to archaeologists. For example, the prominent Finnish archaeologist Christian Carpelan (2000) explicitly denies its utility in rock art research, claiming that the transition from hunting and gathering to farming has left such deep marks that an interpretation of hunter-gatherer rock art based on recent folk poetry is ‘delusional’, even if ‘some memories of Stone Age forager societies might lie deep in the bottom sediments of our ancient folk poetry’ (Carpelan 2000:9, my translation).

Such criticisms are, to a certain extent, justified, but debilitating if they are allowed to define the possible routes of investigation. Even a slight prospect of Stone Age ‘memories’ existing in recent ethnography should encourage us to explore this material for what it is worth. Carpelan is right to point out that the gradual adoption of agriculture since the Neolithic has left deep marks in Finnish pre-Christian religion, which is arguably historically more ‘stratified’ than that of the Saami (Siikala 2002a). Yet because Finland lies at the northern margin of the climatic zone suitable for agriculture, hunting remained an important source of

livelihood up until recent times (Zvelebil & Rowley-Conwy 1984), allowing certain extremely archaic aspects of cosmology and ritual (such as bear-ceremonialism and elements of Uralic myth, see Siikala 2002b) to survive in Finnish and Karelian folk religion up until the 19th century.

The approximately 7000-strong Saami population living today in Finland are concentrated in the mountainous tundra of the extreme north of the country, some of them still practicing the traditional economy based on reindeer herding. However, Saami place names, oral tradition and early historical sources suggest a Saami population living in the Central Finnish rock art region still in the 16th century (Aikio & Aikio 2003). Reindeer nomadism, on the other hand, appears to be a relatively recent development among the Saami, apparently replacing hunting and fishing as the primary means of subsistence only in the 17th century (Hultkrantz 1985). The transition from hunting and fishing to reindeer nomadism is so recent that, according to Hultkrantz (1985:27–28), the changes it caused in Saami pre-Christian religion were few and of little importance: 'To all essential purposes the old hunting and fishing religion remained.'

THE STEED AND BOAT OF THE NOAIDI IN SAAMI PRE-CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Two aspects of traditional Saami religion are emphasised in this paper: the role of the *noaidi* ('shaman') as a mediator between the worlds of humans and spirits, and the notion that certain rocks, cliffs or mountains are sacred and inhabited by the spirit helper beings of the *noaidi*. The *noaidi* used a drum to reach trance, in which his free-soul would journey to the world below, often in the shape of a zoomorphic spirit-helper (*noaide gadze*). By visiting the holy mountains and cliffs, the *noaidi* could access the power of the supernatural snake, fish, bird or wild

reindeer (Bäckman 1975, Pentikäinen 1995). Of these three, the wild reindeer (*sáiva sarva*) was most important. The deer of the *noaidi* was a manifestation of his power, his *alter ego*. In his ecstatic journeys, the *noaidi* could assume its shape, or send it out to fight the deer of another shaman. The Saami in general did not perceive an impenetrable boundary between humans and animals: a bear, for example, could become human and vice versa (Pentikäinen 1995:97–98). But the relationship between a *noaidi* and the *sáiva sarva* was special. A strong bond of 'co-essence' united the *noaidi* and his steed: the death of the deer was believed to be fatal to the shaman also (Pentikäinen 1995:190). In the words of Hultkrantz (1978:18):

We have here, in the world of religious imagination, an oscillation between the conception of spirits in animal guise and the conception of the shaman's own extra-corporeal form of appearance, his zoomorphic free-soul. ... To make a clear distinction of these concepts in action would purely be an academic undertaking.

There is some evidence that the *noaidi* could also use a supernatural boat to travel to the otherworld. Although boats do not figure very prominently in this function in the surviving ethnohistorical sources, they are commonly depicted on the membranes of Saami shaman drums and sometimes closely resemble the boat figures of prehistoric rock art (Manker 1950; cf. Fig. 6c & e). The interpretation of drum figures is by no means clear, but an important clue is offered by the 12th-century *Historia Norvegiae*, which includes a detailed account of a Saami shamanic séance (Tolley 1994). The drum of the *noaidi* in *Historia Norvegiae* is described as showing images of water-beasts, reindeer, snow-shoes and a boat – all said to be vehicles for the soul of the shaman. That a boat could have this function in Saami shamanism appears to be confirmed by the account of the 18th-century Norwegian missionary Knud Leem, who tells us that

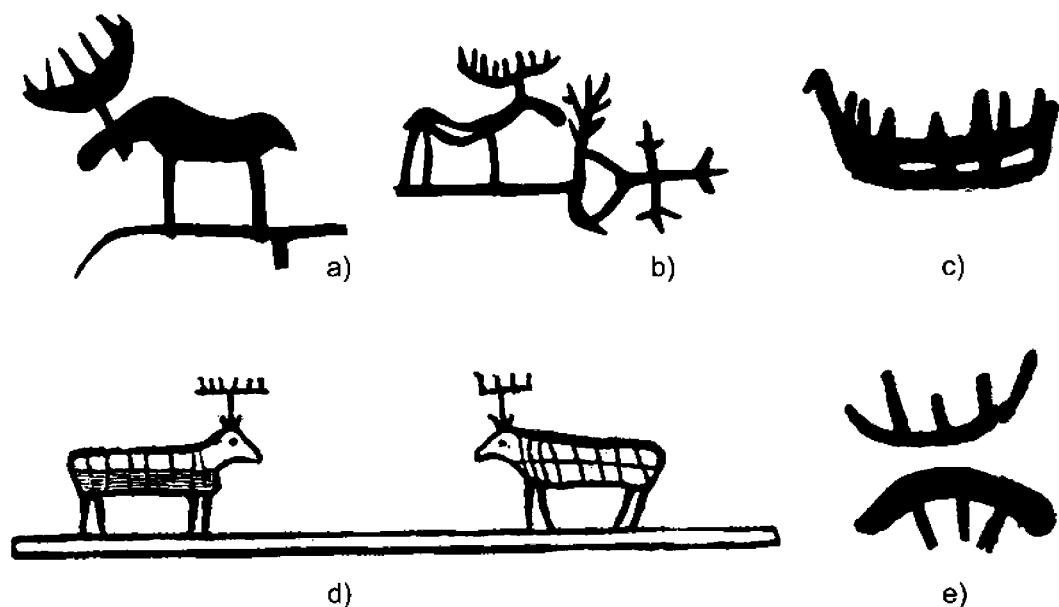


Fig. 6. Images of boats and elk from Saami shaman drums: (a–b) elk with exaggerated, rake- or boat-like antlers in (Manker 1950, drum numbers 1 and 31); (c) a boat figure from Manker's drum number 67; (d) 'the fighting deer of the noaidi' (according to Friis 1871, drum 2); (e) a figure representing a boat with its reflection or the magical struggle between two noaidi – or possibly both (Friis 1871, drum 4).

upon beginning a shamanic journey, the *noaidi* would

Sway back and forth with his hands on the sides, beginning a song with the following words: *Valamastit herke: sjaattjalit vanas* ('Harness the reindeer bull, push the boat to water'). (Leem 1767: 475; my translation).

Further confirmation is offered by Circumpolar ethnography for, as Joan and Romas Vastokas (1973:126) point out, boat imagery has deep roots in both Eurasian and North American shamanism. Probably the most famous example of the role of boats in shamanism is the 'spirit canoe' of the coastal Salish of Washington State. In the rite, Salish shamans join together in an imaginary canoe to travel to the underworld (Vitebsky 2001:44). The Chukchi of the Bering Strait entertained similar ideas of journeying to the Otherworld, as is evidenced by a song performed by the Chukchi

shaman Nuwat (Bogoras 1904–1909:438), in which the shamanic flight is described as journey in a boat steered with a fish-bone paddle. The Chukchi also refer to the shaman drum as a boat, as do the Siberian Evenk, who think of the drum variously as a wild reindeer, a weapon and a boat (Anisimov 1963:117–118).

In addition to images of boats, a second recurring motif in the iconography of Saami drums should be mentioned: the elk. Ernst Manker (1971:13) was the first scholar to draw a comparison between what he calls the 'rake-like form' of elk antlers in both the drums and the carvings of Nämforsen. Indeed, the drum images provide almost perfect parallels to the 'boat-antlered' elk of prehistoric rock art (Fig. 6a–b, d). Manker (1950) interprets the elk depicted in the drums simply as representing the hunter's prey. However, an earlier and ethnographically well-informed writer, Jens Friis, identifies two such animals (Fig. 6d) with boat-like

antlers as the 'fighting deer of the *noaidi*' (Friis 1871:33). And while most other writers interpret the 'boat images' of the drums simply as representing boats, Friis (1871:36) identifies one such image (Fig. 6e) as 'Saivo-Sarvak' – the shaman's deer. These curious double images of boats – possibly showing the boat together with its reflection (Manker 1950:220) – are found in several Saami drums. Here it is interesting to note that the lower world (*saivo*) was understood by the Saami as an 'upside-down' world, where everything appears as a mirror-image of the world of everyday life (Pentikäinen 1995:251–253). A drawing of a boat together with its reflection could then be understood to indicate the role of the boat in otherworldly travel. But Manker (1950:220) also recognizes the possibility that – like Fig. 6d – it could represent the magical struggle between two *noaidi*. Both of Manker's suggestions are quite plausible, and, in the light of the present discussion, should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

Apart from the depictions of boats on the membranes of the drums, boat symbolism is sometimes associated with the drums themselves. According to Itkonen (1946:121), the Saami of Lake Kemijärvi in Finland used boat-shaped drums, of which they used the name *lodde-karbes* or 'bird-boat'. This would seem to suggest that, like their Siberian colleagues, the Saami *noaidi* sometimes thought of the drum as a boat.

VÄINÄMÖINEN'S 'BLUE ELK' AND SUPERNATURAL BOAT IN KALEVALA –METRIC POETRY

It appears that similar ideas of a cervid 'soul animal' and of the boat as the shaman's vehicle can be found also in the Finnish pre-Christian religious tradition, as recorded in *Kalevala* poetry. These ideas are often shrouded in the metaphoric language of myth, and their interpretation requires some knowledge of the wider cultural and mythological context of the individual poems – an

ability to 'read between the lines' (cf. Sundstrom 2006) – but the parallels with Saami shamanism are obvious.

The main protagonist of *Kalevala*-metric poetry, the 'eternal sage' Väinämöinen, was already identified as a shaman by the Finnish linguist and explorer Matias Castrén in the mid-19th century (Castrén 1853) – a view that was later canonised by scholars such as Comparetti (1892) and Haavio (1952). Väinämöinen's instrument is not a drum but the *kantele* (a five-stringed instrument resembling the zither), which he – like Orpheus in Greek myth – plays with such skill that even the wild beasts of the forest gather to listen (Fig. 7). The *kantele*, however, is not a mere musical instrument. The word itself is etymologically related to *kannus* (the Finnish word for Saami shaman drum), and the instrument was used by traditional Finnish 'wise men' (*noita* or *tietäjä*) to achieve trance (Siikala 2002a:345). Karjalainen (1918:565–566), moreover, informs us that similar five-stringed instruments were sometimes used also by Khanty shamans for the same purpose.

Although commonly described as being made of pike or salmon bone, some poems tell us that Väinämöinen's *kantele* was made of elk horn or 'from the thigh bone of the blue deer' (Haavio 1952:152). This association of the shaman's instrument with a 'blue deer' is interesting, because in his journeys to Northland or similar otherworldly *topoi*, Väinämöinen is often described as mounting a 'blue elk' or 'blue deer' (the distinction seems to be of little importance to the bards), 'a stallion of straw' or a 'horse of peastalks' (Oinas 1985:154–159). In 1835 Lönnrot recorded in Jyskyjärvi (Russian Karelia) the following version of a widely known poem, in which an unnamed Saami ambushes the hero Väinämöinen:

Now comes Väinämöinen
Gallop along
On the back of a blue elk,



Fig. 7. *Väinämöinen plays the kantele on a rock by the shore* (Elias Muukka, oil on canvas, 1914). His boat is shown on the foreground, and around him we see the spirits of the water and the forest gathering to listen. Based on the descriptions given in the poems, the artist has placed the scene in a landscape identical to that of most Finnish rock paintings. Photo: Antti Lahelma. © University of Turku.

Stroking its back,
 Patting its hide,
 Steadfast old Väinämöinen.
 [The Saami] Spied a black speck on the sea,
 A bluish speck on the wave:
 Now comes Väinämöinen;
 He flexed his bow
 [...]
 Did not hit Väinämöinen
 But hit his horse
 Under its arms
 Through the warm flesh. (SKVR I:11, lines 19–29,
 35–38; my translation)

The strange image of Väinämöinen riding an elk or deer on the open sea has mystified many students of Finnish folk poetry. Because elk cannot be tamed or used as steeds (the Swedish army famously did try to harness elk for military use in the 18th century, but

failed) and in any case they are not blue and do not walk on water, this description of Väinämöinen's steed has often been interpreted as a poetic metaphor. Uno Harva (1934), for example, interpreted the blue elk as a ship equipped with an elk-head effigy in the prow, even though he was probably unaware of the existence of such images in rock art. Harva found a parallel to the blue elk in a curious medieval fresco in the church of Kalanti (south-western Finland), where an elk-headed ship appears to be depicted. Haavio (1935) agreed that the 'steed' should be understood as a ship, but preferred to explain it as a kenning, comparing it with expressions like 'sailhorse' or 'wavehorse' used of Viking ships Old Norse poetry.

But it is surely Oinas (1985:154–159) who is correct in identifying the animal as the

supernatural steed of the shaman – his spirit helper in journeys to the world beyond – and the ambush scene as a shamanic battle. That the steed is not a concrete boat is specifically stressed by the bards, who inform us that the hoofs of the animal do not touch the water (Oinas 1985:158). On the other hand, in a number of poems Väinämöinen is expressly described as journeying to the Otherworld in a boat (see below). It seems evident, then, that Väinämöinen could employ both an animal steed (elk or horse) and a boat on his otherworldly journeys, and that the distinction between the two means of transport was somewhat ambiguous.

Like Väinämöinen's *kantele*, the primeval boat is described in the poems as being constructed from animal bones (Kuusi *et al.* 1977:532). Depending on the variant, the bones used are said to belong to a bird, fish, or reindeer, raising an obvious parallel with the zoomorphic spirit helpers of the *noaidi*. That Väinämöinen's 'boat of song' was no ordinary vessel is, furthermore, made clear in an another significant poem, where

Sturdy old Väinämöinen
Made a boat with his knowledge
Built a craft with his singing:
Three words were lacking. (Kuusi *et al.* 1977:183)

The missing esoteric knowledge ('three words') he acquires by visiting the grave of Antero Vipunen, the mythical first shaman (Haavio 1952:106–139). At first Vipunen swallows Väinämöinen, but eventually has to give in and utter the words that allow Väinämöinen to 'finish off his boat' (Kuusi *et al.* 1977:185). That Väinämöinen could use his supernatural boat for otherworldly travel is, finally, indicated by a poem in which he

Sang a copper-bottomed boat
Plunged to the depths of the sea
To the earth-mothers below
Up to the heavens above
Into the whirlpool's gullet. (Kuusi *et al.* 1977: 279–80)

Some lines, often associated with the ambush myth mentioned above, describe Väinämöinen as 'writing a book on the stone' or 'drawing a line on the rock' with his finger (e.g. SKVR I:11, 39). Some poems even speak of an 'ornamented mountain' (Finn. *kirjovuori*) associated with the primeval elk (Kuusi *et al.* 1977:549). Although difficult to interpret, such passages may conceivably refer to rock art.

Yet even if none of the poems feature unambiguous references to rock art, many of them do place Väinämöinen's 'boat-building', singing and *kantele*-playing in locations that are characteristic of Finnish rock paintings (Fig. 7). Väinämöinen typically sings or plays 'on a rocky hill by the shore, or on a joy-stone, sometimes on a music-boulder or on a play-rock' (Haavio 1952:157). Remarkably, he is described as sitting on a large boulder even while he is on a boat journey – a rather bizarre image that makes it clear that the boat journey is not to be taken literally, but is in fact a shamanic metaphor. In the same vein, the carving of the boat is described as taking place on a cliff, mountain or rocky hill (Haavio 1952:215) – strange locations for building boats, but easier to understand if 'building a boat' is understood as a metaphor for the shamanic *séance*. Singing and playing at boulders and rocky cliffs also suggests a comparison with the Saami *noaidi*, who sometimes visited sacred rocks or cliffs (*sieidi*) in order to sing and fall in trance. This was done because the spirit helpers of the *noaidi* were thought to live in such places (Bäckman 1975).

UNDERSTANDING 'ELK-BOATS' AND 'BOAT-ANTLERED' ELK

Returning back to Pyhänpää, an interpretation can now be offered to the main group. What quality or function did the elk, the boat and the human share with each other that made the combination intelligible? First, we may note that both elk and boats 'swim',

and a swimming elk, with horns aloft, may have resembled the profile of a canoe with seated crew on board. If elk hides were used as skins around the wooden ‘bones’ of the boat frame, this could have further strengthened the conceptual links between elk and boats.² In an animistic context, as among many Circumpolar cultures, an inanimate object such as a boat or a drum could be viewed as a ‘person’. The Finno-Ugric Mari (who live in Central Russia), for example, believed that boats were living creatures that should be treated with respect and, when they started to leak, should to be laid to rest so that they may enjoy old age (Holmberg 1914:55–56). In the same way, the Tuvan shaman drum was thought of as a horse (even though it was made of elk skin) that had to be tamed and trained before it could be used (Vajñštejn 1968:131). In the ceremony of its ‘enlivening’, the spirit of the drum was addressed as follows:

Let us make you overgrown with flesh
 Let us make you a living creature,
 We will ride you
 Over the tops of low
 And high trees
 We shall fly, smoothly fly. (Vajñštejn 1968:132)

The Saami *noaidi* similarly had a personal relationship with the drum, which was usually made by the *noaidi* himself (Pentikäinen 1987:139). We thus cannot expect to find a rigid categorical distinction between animate and inanimate things either among modern Circumpolar peoples or prehistoric hunter-gatherers. And as we have seen, both boats and elk/deer could be used by the shaman on journeys to the Otherworld. This makes it easier to understand how several Siberian peoples – such as the Nganasans, Nenets, Selkups and Evenks – can describe the shaman drum as *both a deer and a boat at the same time*. As indicated by such images as the ‘elk-boats with legs’ mentioned above, the prehistoric makers of rock art may likewise have thought of boats

and elk/deer as being, in a sense, interchangeable. That a drum could be understood as a ‘deer-boat’ is, according to Siikala (2002a:52), not a mere poetic metaphor: in visions and shamanic songs it is perceived to be a concrete object.

This view of the drum as a living deer-boat-being is a key to understanding the painting of Pyhänpää, which can now be interpreted as a depiction of the ‘shamanic flight’ on an ‘elk-boat’. Whether or not the Subneolithic shamans of Finland used drums is of little importance. They may have, but monotonous singing or chanting, for example, could have served the same purpose – as indeed it did for both the Saami *noaidi* and Finnish *tietäjä* (Siikala 2002a:277–280, Pentikäinen 1995). But to make this interpretation more compelling, we must consider also the ‘bestiality scenes’ – or combinations of elk and men.

RIDING ELK/DEER AND TAPPING TO THEIR POWER

Sexual symbolism is ubiquitous in Siberian shamanism, although often downplayed in early ethnographic accounts (Schmidt 2000:71). For example, the classic kind of séance, in which rhythmic drumming gradually increases its tempo, reaching a climax when the shaman falls into trance, has been likened to sexual intercourse (Hoppál 2003:134–135). Among several Siberian peoples, such as the Goldi (Eliade 1964:71–74), shamans were believed to have sexual encounters with their spirit helpers. The anthropologist Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer was told by a Sakha (Yakut) curer that shamans

should be able to balance and mediate energies within multiple levels of cosmological worlds. To do so requires spiritual transformations into animals and the harnessing of both male and female sexual potential. For many, this means having male shamans accept female spirit helpers as guides, and vice versa, incorporating their power and even their gendered essence in trance

and during séances. It can involve tapping the gendered essence of a tree, for instance the female birch, to cure a male patient. (Mandelstam Balzer 1996:164)

This last remark is particularly interesting, because it may give us a clue to the rather puzzling fact that most of the images of elk portrayed in Finnish and North European rock art appear to be female. Apart from a number of extraordinary figures such as Pyhänpää, elk figures generally do not have antlers, and depictions of elk with a prominent chin tuft (indicating an elk bull) are rare. Strangely enough, at some sites (including Pyhänpää, Nämforsen and Åbosjön; see Figs. 2, 3a and 5b) we find elk that have both 'female' (no chin tuft) and 'male' (boat-like antlers) characteristics. There does not seem to be any rational explanation to these facts – but if we interpret the elk figures as representing elk-shaped spirit helpers, an explanation can be offered both to the bestiality scenes and the high proportion of female elk. If the shamans of Finland's Subneolithic societies were predominantly male – as is the case in most modern circumpolar hunter-gatherer societies (Hoppál 2003) – their spirit helper beings may have been generally imagined as being of the opposite sex. The 'bestiality scenes' of rock art might then be understood as images of a male shaman 'tapping the gendered essence' of a female elk. As among the Goldi and Sakha, this may have involved having a sexual relationship with the spirit helper being (cf. Bolin 2000:162).³

In the examples given above, we have seen that in Circumpolar shamanism the shaman could either ride his or her steed or physically assume its shape. Both of these beliefs appear to find an expression in North European rock art. Horned human figures shown riding an elk or a deer are found in the rock paintings of Verla, Finland (Fig. 8b) and Hästskotjärn, Sweden (Fig. 8c), and similar scenes are found also in Norwegian rock carvings (Fig. 8d-f). These images can be

compared with a fascinating drawing made by a Finno-Ugric Selkup shaman, which shows the drumming shaman (with horns on his head) riding a deer to the otherworld (Fig. 8a). On the other hand, the painting of Pyhänpää and an image found at Nämforsen (Fig. 5f) provide examples of a human and elk actually merged together to form a single entity. Such images may be understood as depicting the elk-shaped soul animal as the *alter ego* of the shaman (Bolin 2000:164), perhaps reflecting a sense of 'co-essence' similar to that which existed between the Saami *noaidi* and his or her deer.

TOUCHING, LISTENING AND SINGING

In view of Saami and Finnish ethnography, the religious ideas underlying the combination of an elk, a human and a boat at Pyhänpää appear comprehensible. Unfortunately, however, the ethnographic sources do not provide any clear-cut answers to the question of why such ideas should be represented on a lakeshore rock cliff. As we have seen, the iconography of Saami drums does appear somehow related to the archaic imagery of hunter-gatherer rock art, and its meanings in some cases related. But the basic functions of these two arts are scarcely comparable.

The figures of the Saami drums, much more diverse than those of rock art, formed according to Pentikäinen (1987:139) 'a kind of a cognitive map for the trip of the shaman's ego-soul between the three levels of the universe.' At the same time, they were used in divination – a purpose that is likely to have developed comparatively late in history (Manker 1971: 24).⁴ A bone or metal pointer placed on the membrane moved from figure to figure with every beat of the drum, revealing information concerning the future. Finnish rock paintings, on the other hand, are unlikely to have formed a cognitive map because the range of imagery is so limited and monotonous, and are even less likely to be related to divination in any way. Thus, even though the

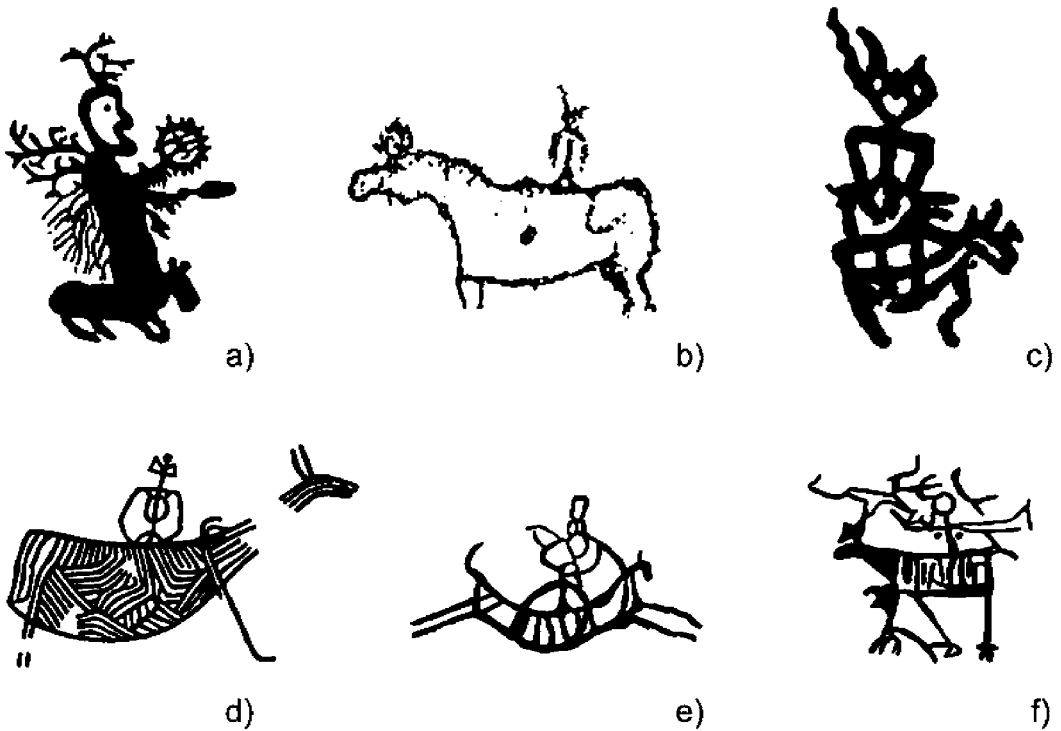


Fig. 8. A drawing (a) made by a Selkup shaman, showing the shaman – with horns on his head – beating a drum and riding an elk or a deer to the otherworld (Hoppál 2003:63), and similar images found in the rock art sites of (b) Verla, Finland (Miettinen 2000:114); (c) Hästskotjärn, Sweden (Hallström 1960, Plate I: C:2); (d) Vingen, Norway (Hagen 1969:86); (e) Ausevik, Norway (Hagen 1969:86) and Alta, Norway (Helskog 1988:83).

iconography of the two arts is probably related, the reasons of image-making were probably different. This observation highlights the fact that the ethnographic record shows evidence of both continuity and change, which at the same time justifies the use of direct historical analogy and warns against too simplistic conclusions.

But even if ethnographic sources do not provide an obvious answer to the question of why the cliff of Pyhänpää was painted, they do offer at least one important clue. This is the fact that the spirit helper beings of the *noaidi*, encountered in ecstatic visions, were thought to live *inside sacred cliffs* (Bäckman 1975). How did this notion – common in the ethnography of world rock art – arise? My suggestion is two-fold: it has to do with

trance-induced visual hallucinations and echoing.

In a recent book on Palaeolithic cave art, David Lewis-Williams (2002) presents a theory that may be applicable to Finnish rock paintings also. Lewis-Williams claims that the idea of spirit animals living inside rock cliffs, common in the ethnography of rock art, is related to the manner in which trance-induced mental images are experienced. He points out that clinical studies have shown that hallucinatory trance visions appear to the person experiencing them as if they were projected onto two-dimensional surfaces, such as cave walls or rock cliffs. Lewis-Williams (2002:180–203) goes on to argue that the origin of image-making as a whole can be associated with the need to recall and socialize visions experienced

in altered states of consciousness. He maintains that this practice has its roots already among the Palaeolithic hunters, who began to make representational images of animals so as to 'fix' their mental images of spirit animals on rock walls in order to share them with other members of the community. According to Lewis-Williams (2002:193), the Palaeolithic painters did not invent the images of aurochs, deer or wild horses, but were 'merely touching *what was already there*' (original italics).

I have argued elsewhere (Lahelma 2005) that Finnish rock art consists mainly of depictions of spirit animals and of trance experiences of falling, diving and metamorphosis. If this interpretation is correct, the reasons for painting may be related to a need to tap to the supernatural power of the animals, and to socialize the trance-induced encounters with these spirit beings. An ethnographic parallel is provided by the South African San Bushmen, who viewed rock paintings as reservoirs of supernatural potency (Lewis-Williams 2002:160–161). A San informant explained that in order to access this potency, the paintings (made with a paint partly composed of eland blood) were repeatedly touched and rubbed. Although geographically far-fetched, such parallels provide important clues to how hunter-gatherer rock art as a phenomenon should be approached. It is conceivable that the images of Finnish rock art were similarly touched in order to tap into the power of the elk-shaped beings 'fixed' on the rock surface. Judging by its use in contemporary burials and clay figurines, red ochre was probably viewed as a potent substance. The red ochre handprints found at some Finnish rock paintings (Fig. 9) – often superimposed on elk figures – may indicate ritual touching of the cliff and the painted animals for, as Lewis-Williams (2002:161) points out, such images are unlikely to be associated with making 'pictures of hands'. The fact that some Finnish rock paintings appear smeared likewise suggests that the paintings were not merely looked at. Images that show a human

figure touching the hind part of an elk, discussed above, also suggest that the act of touching was significant.

Quite apart from hallucinatory experiences, the exceptional 'soundscape' of steep lakeshore cliffs may have contributed to the notion that they are inhabited by spirits. The sound dimension is an aspect often neglected in interpretations of rock art, but as Goldhahn (2002) has convincingly argued, it may sometimes be an essential element in its production and location. At the Nämforsen carvings, both the rhythmic pecking of carvings and the thundering noise of the rapids may have been trance-inducing factors (Goldhahn 2002:50). Pyhänpää, by contrast, is a barren and silent place, but unusual sounds may have played an important role here too. Especially on still weather, the steep rock cliff at water's edge produces echoes and accentuates all sounds – water dripping from the cliff, the sound of waves against the planks of a boat, human conversation – making them seem louder or giving the impression that they derive from inside the cliff. Such echoing would have been an especially significant factor if, as I suggested above, trance was induced by way of monotonous singing.

Even for modern observers, the startling echoes experienced at such sites may create an 'eerie' atmosphere, and in pre-modern cultures they may have contributed to a notion that spirits live inside the rock. Waller (2002) has presented evidence that echoing is cross-culturally associated with spirits and may have played a significant role in rock art location worldwide. There is some evidence of such beliefs in Finland, too. An early-20th century ethnographer Samuli Paulaharju (1932:50) reported that the steep lakeshore cliff of Taatsinkirkko (which greatly resembles rock painting sites) in Finnish Lapland was viewed as a sacred site (*sieidi*) by the Saami because of the echo: they 'sang their sieidi-prayers there ... because the cliff resounded' (Paulaharju 1932:50).



Fig. 9. Part of the rock painting of Astuvansalmi, Finland (Sarvas 1969, group f). Note the numerous handprints superimposed on elk figures and the horned anthropomorph positioned behind the upper elk. The 'Artemis'-figure on the left suggests a comparison with the Saami goddess of midwifery and birth, Juksakka ('Bow-lady').

CONCLUSIONS

In his discussion of the Nämforsen carvings, Tilley (1993:110) emphasised the ambiguous nature of the carved 'designs' – that they 'possess a multiplicity of meanings, that this might constitute their essence, that they were as ambiguous in their meaning for those actually carrying out the rock carvings as for the contemporary archaeologists.' This paper does not deny the polysemic nature of symbols such as elk and boats in the wider context of North European hunter-gatherer rock art, but argues that in the context of a small rock art site the range of possible meanings is more limited and the 'onion of meaning' does in fact have a solid kernel. The rock painting of Pyhänpää certainly seems almost emblematic of a set of beliefs recorded in Northern Fennoscandia in the historical period, in which:

- both elk and boats were invested with a capacity to move from one zone of the cosmos to another;
- both elk and boats could function as the shaman's vehicles in the passage

from this world to the other, and also formed a part of his or her ego;

- both elk and boats were understood as living, sentient 'persons'; and
- these spirit vehicle-beings were thought to 'live' inside sacred rock cliffs, by visiting which their power could be accessed.

As we have seen, this set of beliefs has led to a certain ambiguity in the religious imagery concerning elk (or deer) and boats in both Saami and Finnish pre-Christian religion, and it seems probable that we find here an explanation to the ambiguous imagery of rock art also. In both oral tradition and the rock art tradition, this 'fluidity' of imagery appears to have been facilitated by a sense of co-essence between the shaman, his soul animal (the elk or deer) and his vehicle (the boat). The central image of Pyhänpää can thus be interpreted as showing the shamanic flight, where the free-soul of the shaman and his spirit vehicles form a single being.

When the painting of Pyhänpää is here associated with 'shamanism', it should be

noted that the definition and cross-cultural validity of the terms shaman and shamanism have recently been subject to intense and often critical discussion (e.g. Francfort & Hamayon 2001, Price 2001, Lewis-Williams 2003b). I feel, however, that the use of the terms in this paper is justified because many aspects of Saami and Finnish pre-Christian religion – such as tripartite cosmology, zoomorphic spirit helpers, trance journeys and the institutions of the *noaidi* and the *tietäjä* – correspond closely to the 'classic' definition of shamanism based on Evenk and other Siberian ethnography (Hultkrantz 1978). Like 'art' and 'religion', the term 'shamanism' has an obvious pragmatic utility, in spite of the problems with definition or applying such concepts outside the secularised sphere of Western Christendom. However, as the approach adopted here emphasises a strictly local historical trajectory; it is not dependent on cross-cultural generalizations of the kind advocated by Eliade (1964). Accordingly, the critique of archaeological uses of 'shamanism' (e.g. Bahn 2001) is not particularly relevant to the issues at hand.

Admittedly, the temporal gap between the rock paintings, Saami beliefs and *Kalevala*-metric poetry presents a more serious challenge. The apparent iconographic similarities between Saami drum figures and rock art, for example, might simply be coincidental. Although it seems quite possible that rock art imagery was long ago 'transferred' to drum membranes – a perishable material – which might then form a direct link to rock art (Helskog 1987), so far there isn't much material evidence to support this theory. The suggested long-term continuity of religious ideas, on the other hand, appears likely but fiendishly difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt. In spite of the various bridging arguments offered above, the leap from recent ethnography to Stone Age archaeology is a perilous one. Many scholars have made it with too much ease. But even a slight potential of a direct historical connection

seems worth exploring, because it is the only approach that may offer us a genuine understanding of the beliefs and worldview of a very distant Stone Age past. It is very rare that we get this kind of an opportunity in archaeology.

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NOTES

¹ The term 'Karelia', as used in this paper, refers to the wider cultural and linguistic region on both sides of the Finnish–Russian border, not to the modern Autonomous Republic of Karelia (part of the Russian Federation) or the Finnish provinces of Southern and Northern Karelia.

² A further, interesting element is added by the discovery of a 40-cm long Late Mesolithic wooden elk-head sculpture from a bog in Rovaniemi, Northern Finland (Erä-Esko 1958). Based on the presence of elk-boats in rock art and the fact that the 'neck' of the sculpture is hollow and was evidently attached to some sort of a shaft, it has been interpreted as belonging to the prow of a boat. The find provides evidence that aside from the imaginary 'elk-boats' discussed in this paper, real vessels were also associated with elk.

³ However, gender roles may have been different in deep prehistory. It is interesting to note that

out of the five ‘Mesolithic shamans’ identified by Schmidt (2000:25) at the cemeteries of Olenii Ostrov (Russian Karelia) and Skateholm (Sweden), three are male and two are female. These five burials are obviously too few for drawing any general conclusions – but note also that Fig. 8 appears to show a female figure riding a deer.

⁴ It is worth noting that the 12th-century *Historia Norvegiae* only records such figures on the drum membrane that are associated with the shaman’s ecstatic flight (Tolley 1994). The great elaboration of the types and meanings of drum figures may thus be a late development.

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APPENDIX 1

THE ACCOUNT OF A SAAMI SHAMANIC SÉANCE IN *HISTORIA NORVEGIAE*

The oldest historical record of a Saami shamanic séance, included in the *Historia Norvegiae* that probably dates to the 12th century AD (although there is some uncertainty concerning the dating), describes a rather strange series of events between Norwegian and Saami traders. The account includes a detailed description of a Saami shamanistic séance, including a description of a shaman drum and a subaquatic trance journey in the shape of a “water beast”. Because the passage appears to be relevant to the interpretation of Finnish rock art, it is reproduced here in full, as translated by Clive Tolley. Regarding the translation, it should be pointed out that the word *cetus* – used in the account to describe one of the drum figures and the shape assumed by the *noaidi* – would normally be translated as a whale, but because the setting of the trance journey is a lake, Tolley (1994: 137) thinks that the intended meaning is probably pike.

Horum itaque intollerabilis [sic] perfidia vix cuiquam credibilis videbitur, quantumve diabolicæ superstitionis in magica arte exerçant. Sunt namque quidam ex ipsis, qui quasi prophetæ a stolido vulgo venerantur, quoniam per immundum spiritum, quem gandum vocitant, multis multa præsagia ut eveniunt quandoque percunctati prædicent; et de longinquis provinciis res concupiscibiles miro modo sibi alliciunt nec non absconditos thesauros longe remoti mirafice produunt. Quadam vero vice dum christiani causa commercii apud Finnos ad mensam sedissent, illorum hospita subito inclinata expiravit; unde christianis multum dolentibus non mortuam sed a gandis æmulorum esse deprædatam, sese illam cito adepturos ipsi Finni nihil contristati respondent. Tunc quidam magus extenso panno, sub quo se ad profanas veneficas incantationes præparat, quoddam vasculum ad modum taratantarorum sursum erectis manibus extulit, cetinis atque cervinis formulis cum loris et ondriolis navicula etiam cum remis occupatum, quibus vehiculis per alta nivium et devexa montium vel profunda stagnorum ille diabolicus gandum uteretur. Cumque diutissime incantando tali apparatu ibi saltasset, humo tandem prostratus totusque niger ut Æthiops, spumans ora ut puta freneticus, præruptus ventrem vix aliquando cum maximo fremore emisit spiritum. Tum alterum in magica arte peritissimum consuluerunt, quid de utrisque actum sit. Qui simili modo sed non eodem eventu suum implevit officium, namque hospita sana surrexit et defunctum magum tali eventu interisse eis intimavit: gandum videlicet ejus in cetinam effigiem inmaginatum ostico gando in præacutas sudes transformato, dum per quoddam stagnum velocissime prosiliret, malo omine obviasset, quia in stagni ejusdem profundo sudes latinantes exacti ventrem perforabant; quod et in mago domi mortuo apparuit.

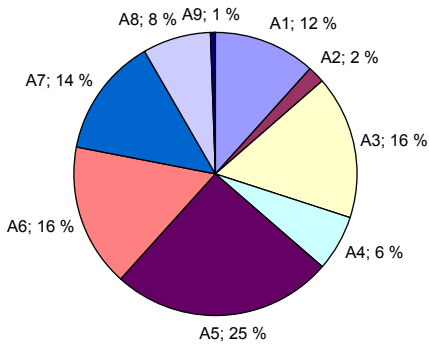
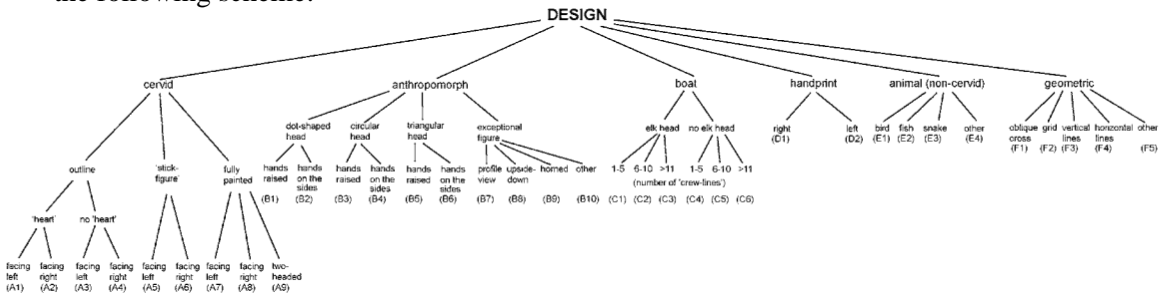
Moreover their intolerable paganism, and the amount of devilish superstition they practice in their magic, will seem credible to almost no one. For there are some of them who are venerated as prophets by the ignorant populace, since by means of an unclean spirit they call a *gandus* they predict many things to many people, both as they are happening, and when delayed; and they draw desirable things to themselves from far off regions in a wondrous way, and amazingly, though themselves far away, they produce hidden treasures. By some chance while some Christians were sitting at the table amongst the Lapps for the sake of trade their hostess suddenly bowed over and died; hence the Christians mourned greatly, but were told by the Lapps, who were not at all distressed, that she was not dead but stolen away by the *gandi* of rivals, and they would soon get her back. Then a magician stretched out a cloth, under which he prepared himself for impious magic incantations, and with arms stretched up lifted a vessel like a tambourine, covered in diagrams of whales and deer with bridles and snow-shoes and even a ship with oars, vehicles which that devilish *gandus* uses to go across the depths of snow and slopes of mountains or the deep waters. He chanted a long time and jumped about with this piece of equipment, but then was laid flat on the ground, black all over like an Ethiopian, and foaming from the mouth as if wearing a bit. His stomach was ripped open and with the loudest roaring ever he gave up the ghost. Then they consulted the other one who was versed in magic about what had happened to them both. He performed his job in a similar way but not with the same outcome – for the hostess rose up hale – and indicated that the deceased sorcerer had perished by the following sort of accident: his *gandus*, transformed into the shape of a water beast, had by ill luck struck against an enemy's *gandus* changed into sharpened stakes as it was rushing across a lake, for the stakes lying set up in the depths of that same lake had pierced his stomach, as appeared on the dead magician at home.

(Tolley 1994: 136-7)

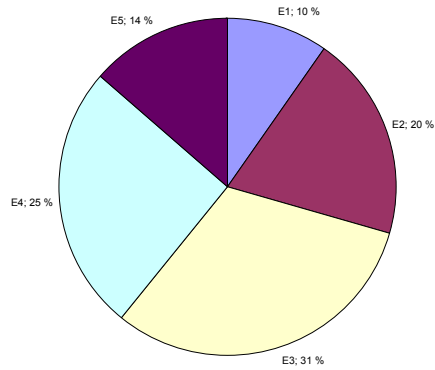
APPENDIX 2

A LIST OF FIGURES REPRESENTED IN FINNISH ROCK ART

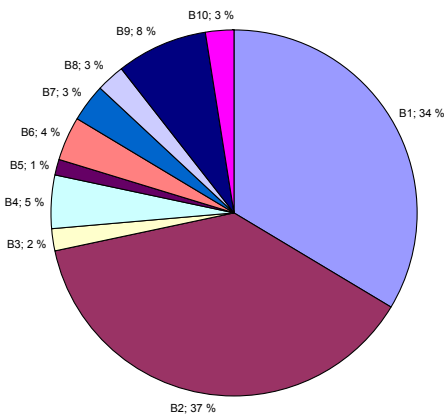
Much of the discussion in section 2.3 is based on the survey of motifs presented in this appendix. The list presented here is based mainly on published and unpublished drawings and tracings made by scholars other than myself (in particular, Pekka Kivikäs, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, Pekka Sarvas and Timo Miettinen), and therefore depends their work. All mistakes in identification are, of course, my own. Note that only clear and unambiguous images have been counted - the real numbers are probably higher. The figures have been categorized into distinct motif types according to the following scheme:



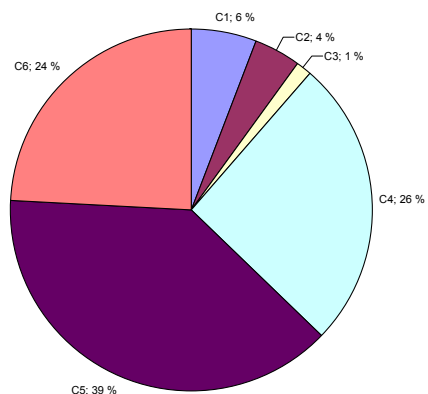
Distribution of cervid types



Distribution of boat types



Distribution of anthropomorph types



Distribution of geometric motifs

Municipality	Name of site	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	D1	D2	E1	E2	E3	E4	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	
Jala	Parakallio													1																							1	
Jala	Uurelanvuori I										1																										1	2
Jala	Uurelanvuori II												1																									2
Joutsa	Viherrinkoski A																																					0
Joutsa	Viherrinkoski B																																					1
Juva	Enkelimpesä																																					0
Juva	Hepo-oja																																					0
Juva	Papinsänky											1																										1
Juva	Sarkaslampi																							1														1
Juva	Sarkasvuori																																				2	
Jyväskylä mlk	Sarkasvuori																																				1	
Jyväskylä mlk	Halsvuori																																				4	
Jämsä	Käpimmiemi																																				0	
Jämsä	Jyrkätkalliot																																				0	
Kesälahti																																					0	
Kirkkonummi	Juusjärvi						2																															15
Kirkkonummi	Vitträsk																																					2
Korpilahti	Raidanlahti																																					3
Kuhmoinen	Varisvuori																																					0
Kuhmoinen	Pyhänpää																																					6
Kuhmoinen	Pyhävuori																																					1
Kuusamo	Julma-Ölkky						1																															3
Kuusankoski	Pakanavuori																																					4
Lammi	Hopeakallio																																					0
Lappeenranta	Keltavuori																																					5
Lappeenranta	Salmenvuori																																					6
Laukaa	Iso-Kuhajärvi																																					0
Laukaa	A & B																																					0
Laukaa	Saraakallio I																																					54
Laukaa	Saraakallio II																																					4
Laukaa	Uittovuori																																					3
Lerni	Haukkasaari																																					0

MUNICIPALITY	NAME OF SITE	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	D1	D2	E1	E2	E3	E4	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Puumala	Kuuntinvuori														1																						1
Puumala	Maksasaaren- selkä				2							1																					1		1		5
Puumala	Sourunniemi													1																						1	
Puumala	Syrgäsalmi				1							3																								1	5
Puumala	Vetotaiipale						2																1										1			4	
Puumala	Vuorilampi																		1																1	1	
Puumala	Toussunlinna										1																									1	1
Puumala	Riuttavuori										2																									2	2
Puumala	Torsanvuori																																			0	0
Puumala	Astuvansalmi	8		8	1	1						10		1					3	2			1	3	5	5	5	3		1		1		3		56	
Puumala	Uttamonsalmi			1	2	1						6		1		1			1				4	3	1										23		
Puumala	Kolmi köyti- seutu						1				4																					3			8		
Puumala	Lapinvuori																																		0	0	
Puumala	Jäkätäinjärvi											1																							1	1	
Puumala	Luotoalahden- vuori																																			0	0
Puumala	Hepokallio																																			0	0
Puumala	Ikonniemi									2																										2	2
Puumala	Karsikkovuori																																			0	0
Puumala	Orivuori																																			2	2
Puumala	Rapakko																																			2	2
Puumala	Halolankallio												1																							1	1
Puumala	Kivikkikko																																			0	0
Puumala	Viidannäki	1																																		2	2
Puumala	Louhovuori						3	3																												6	6
Puumala	Värkälä		1		13	5			2		2	7	1	1	3																					44	44
Puumala	Kannuksen Im- navuori										1																									3	3
Puumala	Lamposaari																																			0	0

APPENDIX 3

A CATALOGUE OF FINNISH ROCK PAINTING SITES KNOWN IN 2007

This book is focused on interpretation and does not strive to present a ‘complete’ overview of Finnish rock art. However, it struck to me that the non-Finnish reader is in a rather inconvenient position because it is difficult to actually validate any of the empirical material the dissertation is based on. For this reason, I decided to include a rather extensive site catalogue, even though similar catalogues have already been published in Finnish. The aim of the catalogue is thus to give the reader a good general idea of Finnish rock painting sites and the images represented therein - hopefully without too much of my interpretative bias. A second aim might be to make this dissertation a little more useful as a sourcebook and a companion on field trips. Alas, writing on a very tight schedule meant that some mistakes may have been left in the catalogue.

The main source of information for the catalogue was the electronic database of ancient sites (Finn. *muinaisjännösrekisteri*) maintained by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities. I have also checked all inspection and survey reports available at the archives of the NBA and added some information from published literature, as well as from discussions with colleagues and personal visits to the sites. Unless otherwise stated, all photos in this appendix were taken by the author. To convey an authentic impression of the art, I have mostly chosen not to manipulate the pictures digitally (other than adjusting contrast and brightness). If the photos have been manipulated, this will be clearly stated. Tracings of the paintings are taken from publications, archived reports and the personal archives of Prof. Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen. Unfortunately, in many cases an exact scale is missing from the tracing, but usually the scale can be worked out from the verbal description of the paintings.

The fields listed for each site are as follows:

Municipality and site. The conventional way of archiving and reporting a site in Finnish archaeology has been based on the formula “municipality + name of site” (e.g. *Ristiina Astuvan-salmi*). In line with this, the sites are here listed in alphabetical order based on the name of the municipality. However, in 21st century Finland, there is an increasing trend for municipalities to merge into larger entities, as a result of which many old municipalities have ceased to exist and new ones have been formed, creating some problems to archaeologists. For this reason, the convention of including the name of the municipality has been avoided in the main body of this dissertation.

Register number. This is the number given to the site in the electronic database maintained by the NBA.

Topographic map: This gives the title and number of the Finnish basic topographic map (scale 1:20 000) on which the site is located.

Coordinates: The *p* and *i* coordinates reported are based on the Finnish grid system (YKJ or *yhtenäiskoordinaatisto*), *z* indicates height in metres above sea level. Note that the height indicates only the lowest part and is in most cases only a rough approximate. For precise measurements of the Lake Saimaa sites, see Kivikäs 1999.

Class: The paintings were divided by the author into the following five classes:

- 1) a rock painting with distinct figures, clearly of ancient date;
- 2) a rock painting that has no distinct figures, but is clearly man-made and ancient;
- 3) an uncertain or possibly modern rock painting;
- 4) red ochre marks that are more likely to be a natural stains than a man-made painting;
- 5) a painting with distinct figures that are likely to be of recent origin (late historical period).

Please note that the classes used here differ from the three-scale system used by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

Description. All descriptions begin with a paragraph describing, in brief, the location and topography of the site, followed by one or more paragraphs that describe the actual paintings. I have kept this field intentionally rather short and concise for two reasons: first, a fair amount of descriptive literature on the rock art sites has already been published (albeit mostly in Finnish, but see e.g. Kivikäs 2005 for descriptions in English), and second, I wanted to leave as much space as possible for photographs and tracings.

Field research. This refers to archaeological fieldwork conducted at the site (surveys, inspections, excavations). In most cases (though not necessarily all), a corresponding research report has been archived at the National Board of Antiquities in Helsinki. The information is in some cases be incomplete, as e.g., all information on fieldwork done in association with the recent EU-projects on rock art (RockCare and RANE) is missing from the NBA database.

Literature. This listing is also incomplete, as the aim is merely to provide some pointers for further information. A full reference is given to all other works except the following:

Kivikäs, P. 1995. *Kalliomaalaukset - muinainen kuva-arkisto*. Jyväskylä, Atena.

Kivikäs, P. 1999. Suursaimaan, Puulan ja Muinais-Päijänteen alueen kalliomaalauksen sijaintipaikat ja korkeudet. *Kalliomaalauksraportteja* 1/1999, 7-111. Jyväskylä.

Kivikäs, P. 2005. *Kallio, maisema ja kalliomaalaus. Rocks, Landscapes and Rock Paintings*. Jyväskylä, Minerva kustannus.

Koponen, M., Kupiainen, R. & Poutiainen, H. 1993. Uusia kalliomaalauksia Saimaalta. *Sihiti* 3, 73-89.

Miettinen, T. 2000. *Kymenlaakson kalliomaalaukset*. Kotka, Painokotka.

Poutiainen, H. & Lahelma, A. 2004. Uusia kalliomaalauksia Päijät-Hämeestä. *Suomen Museo* 110, 59-80.

Maiseman muisti 2001. Maiseman muisti: valtakunnallisesti merkittävät muinaisjäännökset (ed. Paula Purhonen). Helsinki, Museovirasto.

The following sites were discarded from this catalogue:

Kuusjoki Syrjälä (p: 6724 828, i: 3289 776), clearly fake (modern) painting

Lohja Lehtikallio (p: 6694 300, i: 3343 340), probably recent

Luhanka Jyrtynniemi (p: 6851 500, i: 3422 800), probably recent

Mikkeli Ukonsaari (p: 6822 335, i: 3532 750), not verified by an archaeologist

Espoo Vääräjärvi (p: 6690 508, i: 3368 694), clearly fake (modern) painting

Oulu Sarvikangas (p: 7213 001, i: 3434 869), probably recent

Padasjoki Paljaskallio (p: 6835 467, i: 3579 956), probably recent

Pertunmaa Hirsniemi (p: 6807409, i: 3473487), probably recent

Sulkava Käenniemi (p: 6835 467, i: 3579 956), not verified by an archaeologist

Sotkamo Hiidenportin jyrkäne (p: 7089 639, i: 3598 888), probably a natural stain

Taipalsaari Riutanniemi (p: 6783 280, i: 3552 890), probably a natural stain

1.**MUNICIPALITY:** ASIKKALA**SITE:** HUONPOHJANVUORI**Register number:** 1000001370**Year found:** 2003**Topographic map:** 3112 06 Hopeaselkä**Coordinates:** p: 6790 960, i: 3434 390, z: 81.5-84.0**Orientation:** S**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the western part of Lake Ruotsalainen, at a mouth of a bay that extends towards the west. The bay is separated by a narrow strip of land from Lake Päijänne and the location is thus along an important water-route. The painted cliff itself, located on the northern shore of the bay, falls directly into the lake. Its surface is uneven and mostly dark in colour, with some reddish and light grey areas.

Three painted areas were observed in the cliff in 2003. Two apparent elk figures and some areas of paint can be seen in the westernmost area, ca. 4 m above water. To the right of these, located 6.3 m above water, we find a well-preserved boat figure (with at least seven crew lines) and what appears to be a human accompanied by two snakes. The easternmost area consists of three figures on top of each other. The two uppermost figures resemble human stick figures, but have no heads, making the identification uncertain. The lowermost figure is a simple vertical line (snake?) These figures are located ca. 4 m above water.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen

2004, Survey, Anu Kehusmaa

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 72-74

Kivikäs 2005: 48-49

2.**MUNICIPALITY:** ASIKKALA**SITE:** KITTIKALLIO**Register number:** 1000002962**Year found:** 2004**Topographic map:** 3112 03 Pulkkilanharju**Coordinates:** p: 6796 468, i: 3424 884, z: 80**Orientation:** W**Class:** 3**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of the large Lake Päijänne, in a narrow bay called Syntylahti, at a distance of ca. 250 m from the bottom of the bay. The supposed painted area is located ca. 6 m above water level, on a cliff surrounded by boulders of reddish granodiorite.

According to the survey report, the painted figure is unclear but may represent a boat. There is no tracing of the figure available. A rock with possible remains of a rock painting was found ca. 20 m north of the painted spot and collected as a find (NM 34540), but in the spring of 2005 its location was unknown. Judging by the photos in the survey report, the location is somewhat unusual and the painting is difficult to see.

Field research

2004, Survey, Anu Kehusmaa

Literature

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The painted cliff of Leveälähti (or Väinönkallio).



A panorama image of the Huonpohjanvuori cliff.

3.

MUNICIPALITY: ASIKKALA
SITE: LEVEÄLAHTI (VÄINÖNKALLIO)

Register number: 1 000 000 355
Year found: 2002/2003
Topographic map: 3112 05 Urajärvi
Coordinates: p: 6786 32, i: 3439 55, z: 80.5-82.8
Orientation: SE
Class: 1

Description

The painting is located on the western shore of a long and narrow bay (Rutalahti) extending towards south from Lake Ruotsalainen. Leveälahti is a wider area of water in the bay. The paintings are located in an unnamed steep cliff rising at water's edge. The cliff is lightly coloured and visible from afar, although the two small islands (Talassaari and Susisaari) nearby obstruct visibility somewhat.

The paintings consist of two groups. The main group is located ca. 5 m above the present surface of water. This includes two recognisable figures, a boat figure (curving bottom, at least six crew-lines) and an animal figure with two legs and a low posture. Associated with these figures is a large area of paint, the central parts of which have been eroded by ice. The area has included more figures, a few fragments of which are visible, but no motifs can be identified. Ca. two meters below the boat figure, a faint elk figure can be seen. The animal is fully painted, faces left, has two ears and a somewhat horse-like appearance.

The cliff had no known name; the name 'Väinönkallio' is not an 'authentic' placename but was coined by the finder.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen & Antti Lahelma
 2003, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 67-69
 Kivikäs 2005: 46-47

4.

MUNICIPALITY: ASIKKALA
SITE: PATALAHTI

Register number: 1000001369
Year found: 2003
Topographic map: 3112 06 Hopeaselkä
Coordinates: p: 6790 09, i: 3431 73, z: 87.3
Orientation: SE
Class: 1

Description

The site lies in the southern end of the Päijänne lake system, on the northern shore of Kinisselkä, where a small, narrow bay called Patalahti reaches towards the north. The painted area is an outcrop of rock on the western shore of the bay. The cliff of Patalahti is steep, but does not fall directly into water. The base of the cliff is littered with huge boulders that make it rather difficult to access the painting today. The painting is ca. 5 m above ground.

The painting consists of two boat figures at a distance of 70 cm from each other. The boats resemble each other in that the crew-lines are conical in shape and the boats have curved bottoms. The boat on the left (length 34 cm) is difficult to see as it is partially covered by black lichen. It has at least five and possibly seven crew-lines and may have a stylized elk head in the prow. A faint area of paint is associated with this figure; it can have contained more images, which have been washed away by water. The boat on the right (length 27 cm) is well preserved and has five conical crew-lines, a keel and an elk head in the prow.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 72-74.
 Kivikäs 2005: 44-45



A panorama of the Patalahti painting. The painted spot is on a cliff a little to the left from the center of the photo.

5.

MUNICIPALITY: ELIMÄKI

SITE: VESITORNINMÄKI

Register number: 044 01 0021

Year found: 1999

Topographic map: 3024 03 Kimonkylä

Coordinates: p: 6734 84, i: 3469 94, z: 45

Orientation: E

Class: 1

Description

The painting is located in the heart of the municipal centre of Elimäki, on a small (ca. 6 m high) cliff located north of the central square, partially hidden by buildings and vegetation. A concrete water reservoir has been built on top of the cliff, which has once stood on or close to the shore of Lake Elimäenjärvi. The lake, however, has been artificially dried to give way for agriculture. The painting is probably associated with the lake, but lies close to the Stone Age levels of the Baltic Sea and therefore might conceivably also have been made on the seashore. The cliff consists of rapakivi-granite and includes an intriguing cave-like rock formation ca. 20 m north of the painting.

The painting consists of two figures: a large human figure (87 cm high) with raised arms and to the left of it a smaller animal (18 cm high). The animal species cannot be identified, but it does not resemble an elk. The thick paws and curved back remind one of a bear (cub?).

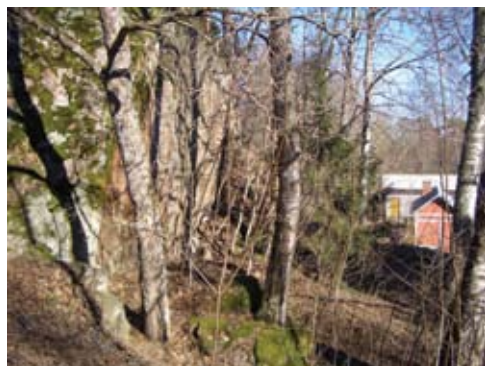
Field research

1999, Inspection, Pirjo Uino

Literature

Miettinen 2000: 152-153.

Kivikäs 2005: 60-61



The site of Vesitorninmäki.

6.

MUNICIPALITY: ENONKOSKI

SITE: HAUKKALAHDENVUORI 1-2

Register number: 046 01 0002

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 4212 07 Ihamaniemi

Coordinates: p: 6900 84, i: 3600 04, z: 82.7

Orientation: SW, S

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on Lake Käkövesi. The high cliff of Havukkavuori lies at the mouth of a long, narrow bay extending to the east. The paintings are located ca. 9.5 m above present water level, on a heavily fractured, lightly coloured cliff face.

The recognition of the figures suffers from blurred areas of paint and faint contours. Three human figures can be distinguished, two of which seem intentionally paired (large and small human). Above this pair, a third human figure has raised arms and possibly horns on its head. The same panel includes remains of several other paintings, apparently including at least two stick-figure elk facing left. Upwards and to the left of the main panel, two handprints are found on a darker grey surface of rock.

A second group of images (Haukkalahdenvuori 2) is located ca. 250 m to ESE (p: 6899 71, i: 4444 05, z: 82.5). Two images are clearly visible: a small stick-figure elk facing right and a human figure with hands on the side and straight feet. In addition to these, the painting has included more images, including possibly two more elk and a second human being next the one described above. The latter two seem to form a pair of large and small human, as in Haukkalahdenvuori 1. Above the stick-figure elk, an upright line has been painted.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas & Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

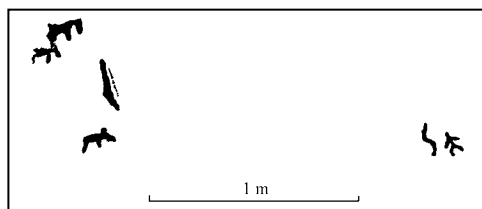
Literature

Sarvas, P. & Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1975: Käköveden kalliomallaukset. *Kotiseutu* 1975/4-5, 133-137.Carpelan, C. 1975: Enonkosken Haukkalanvuoren kalliomaalauksen ikä. *Kotiseutu* 1975, 137-138

Kivikäs 1995: 108-110

Kivikäs 1999: 23-24

Kivikäs 2005: 87



Haukkalahdenvuori 2 according to P. Sarvas & J.-P. Taavitsainen.

7.

MUNICIPALITY: ENONKOSKI

SITE: KURTINVUORI

Register number: 046 01 003

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 4212 07 Ihamaniemi

Coordinates: p: 6894 56, i: 3600 72, z: 83.7

Orientation: S

Class: 1

Description

The painting is located on the northern shore of Lake Enovesi, on a large rocky hill called Kurtinvuori. The location of the painting is exceptional in that it lies inside a cave-like formation formed by a huge erratic boulder and some smaller boulders. The boulders are located on top of a rock terrace close to the present shoreline (ca. 7.2 m above water), forming a striking natural formation rare in Finland. The space inside the "cave" is small: the height is 1.30 m at the entrance, but soon becomes uncomfortably low and would have been unsuitable for occupation. The area around the terrace and the slope of the mountain is littered with erratic boulders.

The paintings face the lake and are located on the entrance of the "cave". A small elk figure with a sagging belly and a disproportionately large head is found on the roof of the cave. The animal is fully painted and faces right. A second elk figure, also painted fully and facing right, may be possible to discern on a rock standing in front of the cave-like formation. Viewed from the lake, the rock (size 110 x 60 cm) has been claimed to resemble an elk skull.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas

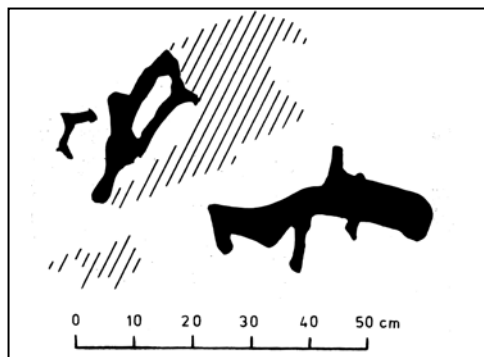
1975, Inspection, Pirjo Rauhala (Uino)

LiteratureRauhala, P. 1976: Enonkosken Kurtinniemen "luola-maalaus". *Suomen Museo* 1976, 53-58.

Kivikäs 1995: 111-113.

Kivikäs 1999: 25

Kivikäs 2005: 90



A tracing by Pirjo Rauhala (Uino) of Kurtinvuori.

8.

MUNICIPALITY: ENONKOSKI

SITE: UKONVUORI

Register number: 046 01 0028

Year found: 1992

Topographic map: 4212 08 Leipämäki

Coordinates: p: 6905 47, i: 3597 26, z: 88.3

Orientation: SSE

Class: 1

Description

The painting is located in the area of Kolovesi national park, on the large island of Vaajasalo, where a long, rocky peninsula called Ukonniemi extends towards the NW. The paintings lie in a large semi-cave on the SW side of Ukonvuori cliff. Although the cavity is rather large, the paintings are exposed to daylight. The front of the cave is littered with large blocks that have fallen from the cliff. According to Kivikäs (1995: 106), the cave has been quarried for quartz even in recent times.

The paintings consist of a single, identifiable human figure, with raised arms (only one arm survives), a dot-like head and feet bent from the knees slightly inwards. The human figure is painted on a boulder that lies at the furthest end of a large semicave. Fragments of other painting motifs can be seen on the walls of the cave, but these cannot be identified properly. The most prominent of these is a circular image, 12 cm in diameter.

It is worth noting that the name of the cliff (*Ukko's* mountain) may indicate a pre-Christian site of worship, *Ukko* ("Old Man") being the supreme deity of pre-Christian Finnish religion.

Field research

1992, Survey, Antti Bilund

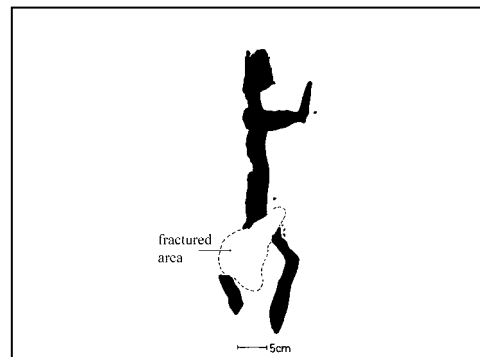
1993, Inspection, Martti Koponen, Risto Kupiainen & Hannu Poutiainen

LiteratureKoponen *et al.* 1993: 78

Kivikäs 1995: 105-107

Kivikäs 1999: 22

Kivikäs 2005: 87



A tracing of Ukonvuori painting (from Koponen, Kupiainen & Poutiainen 1993)

9.

MUNICIPALITY: ENONTEKIÖ

SITE: NÄKKÄLÄN SEITAKIVI

Register number: 47010001

Year found: 1991

Topographic map: 2814 06 Näkkälä

Coordinates: p: 7616 192, i: 3360 665, z: 370

Orientation: ?

Class: 3

Description

A large erratic boulder on the North-Western shore of Näkkäläjärvi in Enontekiö, Finnish Lapland. The boulder is located on a gravel mound a few meters from the shore of the lake. The site is a tourist attraction and can be accessed easily.

Red marks of uncertain origin have been reported on the surface of this famous Saami *sieidi* (sacred stone). Judging by photographs, the marks are interesting and may form fragments of figures, but a natural origin cannot be ruled out and the site should be studied by a geologist as well as by archaeologists. The *sieidi* of Näkkäläjärvi was widely worshipped by both fishermen, reindeer herders and hunters of wild reindeer still in the early 20th century.

Field research

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Literature

Paulaharju, S. 1932: Seitoja ja seidan palvontaa. *Vähäisiä kirjelmää* LXXXIV. SKS, Helsinki.



The small cliff of Jäniskallio.

10.

MUNICIPALITY: ESPOO

SITE: JÄNISKALLIO

Register number: 049 01 0102

Year found: 1969

Topographic map: 2041 10 Nuuskio

Coordinates: p: 6685 847, i: 3366 687, z: 29.6

Orientation: ENE

Class: 1

Description

The painting is located in the national park of Nuuskio near Helsinki, on a rock cliff on the western shore of Lake Pitkäjärvi, ca. 1 km to the north of the southern end of the lake. Jäniskallio is a low, rather unimpressive cliff on the tip of a small peninsula. The cliff falls directly into the lake.

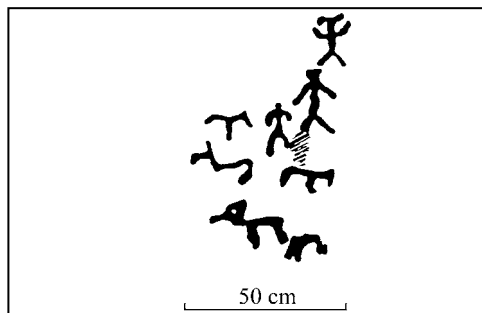
The painting consists of a single image: a rather clumsily painted image of an elk (size ca. 47 x 28 cm) facing left. The animal is painted fully and has a small chin tuft. The painting lies ca. 1.8 m above present water level. About 150 m south of the painting, some remains of red colour – possibly remains of a second, destroyed painting – can be observed on the rock.

Field research

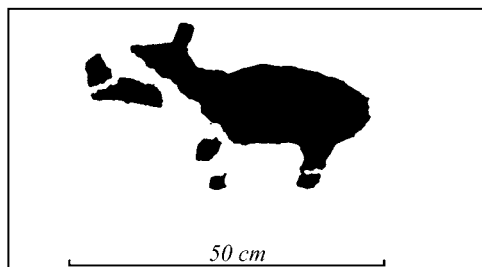
1969, Inspection, Lauri Pohjakallio

Literature

Sarvas, P. 1970: Hällmålningen vid Noux Långträsk. *Finskt Museum* 1970, 12-16.
Kivikäs 1995: 48
Kivikäs 2005: 162



Haukkaladenvuori 1 (see page 204).



The rather unrealistic elk of Jäniskallio.

11.**MUNICIPALITY:** ESPOO**SITE:** PYYSLAMPI**Register number:** -**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 2041 11 Lepsämä**Coordinates:** p: 6694 530, i: 3366 039, z: ?**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the northern shore of a small lake (Pyyslampi), on a cliff rising on the lakeshore.

A possible rock painting has been reported by some, but I was unable to find any convincing remains of prehistoric paint. There is a small V-shaped area of red colour on the cliff, but this could well be a natural haematite stain.

Field research

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Literature

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A group of four small boat figures at Ala-Rieveli.

12.**MUNICIPALITY:** HEINOLA**SITE:** ALA-RIEVELI**Register number:** 089 01 0006**Year found:** 1977**Topographic map:** 3112 12 Heinolan mlk**Coordinates:** p: 6798 580, i: 3454 600, z: 82.3**Orientation:** E**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located on a broken, steep precipice on the NW shore lake of Lake Ala-Rieveli. A small island (Haukkasaari) is located nearby.

The paintings are badly worn. A human figure with raised arms and two boat figures can be distinguished in the main painted area. The boats are painted one on top of the other and have curved bottoms. To the right of this group, a group of four small boat figures have been painted in a square surface of rock. The painting includes a large area of faint red paint as well as other motifs or fragments thereof, but these cannot be identified with any certainty. The size of the painted area is approximately 4 x 2 m.

Field research

1977, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

1985, Inspection, Tapio Seger

LiteratureSeger, T. 1988: Heinolan esihistoria. *Heinolan pitäjän historia*, 28-30. Jyväskylä.

Kivikäs 1995: 233-235



A view of the rock painting site of Ala-Rieveli. The painted panel is hidden by the forest on the left.

13.**MUNICIPALITY:** HEINOLA**SITE:** RAJAKIVI**Register number:** 1000 00 1368**Year found:** 2003**Topographic map:** 3113 11 Konnivesi**Coordinates:** p: 6788 960, i: 3454 050, z: 89.9**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The painting lies on the western shore of the large Lake Konnivesi, at the western end of a small, narrow bay called Koivulahti. The painting lies on the eastern side of a huge (ca. 6.5 m high) erratic boulder called Rajakivi ('Border stone'). The boulder commands a highly visible position at the bottom of the bay. As its name implies, in later times it has marked the border between Heinola town and rural commune.

The painting consists of one image only: a small (14 cm wide and 17 cm high), blurred area of paint, most probably a print of a human left hand. The hand-print lies ca. 1.3 m above ground and faces the lake. The present shoreline lies ca. 60 m to the east of the boulder.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 66

14.**MUNICIPALITY:** HEINOLA**SITE:** RAUTVUORI**Register number:** 1000 00 1367**Year found:** 2003**Topographic map:** 3112 12 Heinolan kk**Coordinates:** p: 6795 570, i: 3451 140, z: 85.9-86.8**Orientation:** S**Class:** 2**Description**

The site lies in the western end of Lake Ala-Rieveli, where a massive cliff formation called Rautvuori lies hidden by the forest. The cliff of Rautvuori is large and impressive, although at present not visible from afar because it is covered by forest. The walls of the cliff are at times very steep and there are numerous areas suitable for painting. The painted site lies closest to the lake, ca. 30 m away from the present shoreline, in a place where a flat terrace makes painting easy and an overhanging cliff offers some protection from rain.

The painting consists of a large (75 cm x 60 cm) area of red paint and two smaller patches of red. The painted area lies ca. 1.3 m above ground. No identifiable figures can be discerned at present. The painted area is partially covered by a modern graffiti made with yellow paint.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004: 65



A tracing of the painting of Ala-Rieveli (p. 207) by Tapio Seger.



The painted boulder of Rajakivi.



The painting of Rautvuori, partly covered by a strange yellow graffiti. Red hues have been digitally emphasised.

15.**MUNICIPALITY:** HEINÄVESI**SITE:** HUMALNIEMI**Register number:** 090 01 0020**Year found:** 1998**Topographic map:** 4212 09 Vihtari**Coordinates:** p: 6916 830, i: 3602 710, z: 87.4**Orientation:** SSE**Class:** 1/5**Description**

The painting is located on the southern shore of Lake Iso-Vihtari, where a peninsula called Humalniemi extends into the lake. The painted spot is rather far from the lake, on a vertical precipice at a distance of ca. 100 m from the present shoreline.

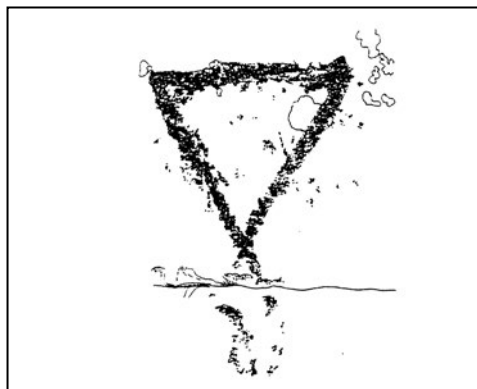
The painting consists of one motif only: a large triangle (70 x 71 x 74 cm) and some traces of paint under it, ca. 90 cm above ground. The 'traffic-sign -like' motif is exceptional – no clear parallels are known from Finnish rock art. Combined with the fact that the painting is located ca. 100 m from the shoreline, this causes some concern for the authenticity of the painting. Some lichen grows on top of the figure, meaning that it is not very recent, but it might still be from the historical period.

Field research

1998, Inspection, Pekka Kivikäs

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 21



A drawing by P. Kivikäs of the Humalniemi painting.

16.**MUNICIPALITY:** HEINÄVESI**SITE:** VIERUNVUORI**Register number:** 090 01 0003**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 4212 06 Pilppa**Coordinates:** p: 6913 120, i: 4435 450, z: 89.5**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located on the eastern shore of a strait (Vierunsalmi) between Lakes Ruokovesi and Kolovesi. The paintings are located on the vertical cliff of Vierunvuori, ca. 13 m above the present surface of the lake. Access is today made difficult by the numerous large boulders that have fallen from the cliff. The paintings are sheltered from the direct rain by the protruding rock.

The best preserved motifs include an outline-drawing of an elk (length 58 cm, height 53 cm) facing right and a human figure positioned behind it. The heart of the elk has been marked with a spot. The human figure (length 40 cm) has a circular head, arms down at the sides, and legs bent from the knees inwards. The two form a clear pair. Left of this group, a less well preserved outline-drawing of an elk facing left can be seen. Some remains of paint behind it might indicate a human figure positioned behind it. A vertical line divides the body of the elk. The painting includes fragments of other images as well, but these are too worn to be identified.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Lauri Pohjakallio

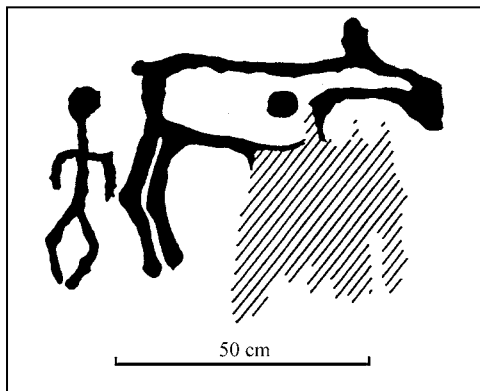
Literature

Pohjakallio, L. 1976: Koloveden kansallipuiston esi-historialliset kalliomaalaukset. *Suomen Luonto* 1976/1, 36-38 & 63.

Kivikäs 1995: 103-104

Kivikäs 1999: 20

Kivikäs 2005: 84



A tracing by Lauri Pohjakallio of the main part of Vierunvuori painting.

17.**MUNICIPALITY:** HIRVENSALMI**SITE:** HAHLAVUORI**Register number:** 097 01 0004**Year found:** 1990**Topographic map:** 3124 06 Puulasalo**Coordinates:** p: 6858 300, i: 3471 500, z: 101.73-103.33**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the western shore of the Kaiskon-selkä area of Lake Puulavesi. Hahlavuori is a vertical precipice, fractured and broken into numerous separate sections. The area between the cliff and the shore is littered with huge boulders that have fallen from the cliff.

Several motifs can be distinguished in this interesting painting. Among the most prominent are four human figures, one which has been portrayed upside down as if diving. The diving figure has an arrow-shaped head and hands on the sides. The three other human figures have all have raised arms, but the heads differ: one is almost triangular, while two are and circular. Six elk figures are also present. Of these, three face left and three face right. Some of the elk can be characterised as 'stick-figure' elk, but some have thin fully painted body, and one elk facing left has been painted in outline. The painting also includes some unidentifiable fragments. Particularly interesting is a semicircle divided in two by a vertical line. The size of the painted area is ca. 2,2 x 1,5 m and it lies ca. 6-7 m above the present level of water.

Field research

1990, Inspection, Juhani Grönhagen & Martti Koponen
1990, Survey, Timo Sepänmaa

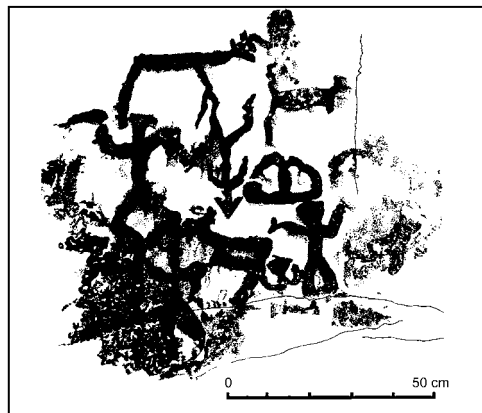
Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 184-188

Kivikäs 1999: 56-57

Maiseman muisti 2001: 157

Kivikäs 2005: 56



The painting of Hahlavuori according to P. Kivikäs.

18.**MUNICIPALITY:** IITTI**SITE:** HAUKKAVUORI (LAKE KONNIVESI)**Register number:** 142 01 0042**Year found:** 1976**Topographic map:** 3112 10 Vuolenkoski**Coordinates:** p: 6779 720, i: 3456 460, z: 83**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting lies in the southern part of the large lake of Konnivesi, on the eastern shore of the wide Kellon-iemi peninsula. The cliff of Haukkavuori is a rugged, imposing precipice that falls almost directly into water. Huge boulders lie at the foot of the cliff. The site lies in a narrow place in the lake, flanked by large cliffs on both sides. The shape of the cliff has been described as anthropomorphic by some observers. The painted spot is not the most prominent part of the cliff, but is situated on a rather unremarkable place to the right of the central part of the cliff. The place is protected from rain water by an overhang.

The painting consists of one image only, a 'running' elk facing right. The painting shows a degree of naturalism that is uncommon in Finnish rock paintings. The head of the elk is fully painted, but the body may have been drawn in outline. The size of the image is 28 x 27 cm.

Field research

1976, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

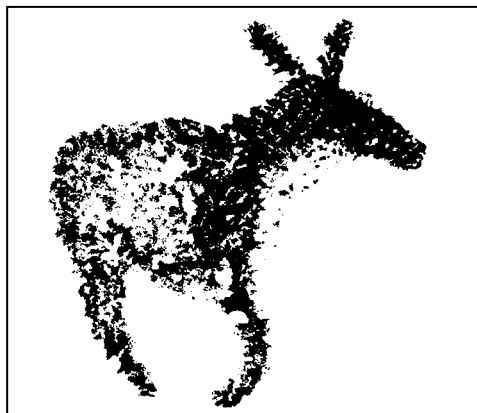
LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1986: Konniveden Haukkavuoren kallio-maalaus. *Iskos* 6, 109-112. Helsinki.

Kivikäs 1995: 230

Miettinen 2000: 73-77

Maiseman muisti 2001: 118-119

Kivikäs 2005: 40



The 'running' elk of Haukkavuori (Lake Konnivesi).



A view of the cliff of Haukkavuori on Lake Konnivesi - not to be confused with an another Haukkavuori below.



The cliff of Haukkavuori on Lake Kotojärvi.

19.**MUNICIPALITY:** IITTI**SITE:** HAUKKAVUORI (LAKE KOTOJÄRVI)**Register number:** 142 01 0020**Year found:** 1970**Topographic map:** 3111 12 Arrajärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6765 160, i: 3457 220, z: 78.6**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting lies in the southern end of a small lake called Kotojärvi, on an impressive cliff rising directly from the lake. The cliff is lightly coloured and has an almost symmetric, semi-circular shape.

The painting consists of an outline painting of an elk (length 73 cm) facing left, with a human being positioned behind it. The two form a clear pair of images. The human figure is badly eroded, but it is possible that the figure has a pair of horns on its head. On the extreme right of the painting, a series of 9 or 10 short horizontal lines can be seen. In addition to these, the painting includes some remains of destroyed motifs, including possible vertical lines and, perhaps, a second elk figure. The total size of the painted area is ca. 4.2 x 2.2 m. A test pit made under water in front of the painting yielded pieces of natural iron ore and remains of unburnt bones (elk and various birds), which have been radiocarbon-dated to ca. 1500 cal. BC.

Field research

1971, Inspection, Sinimarja Ojonen

2003, Survey, Johanna Seppä

LiteratureOjonen, S. 1973: Hällmålningarna vid sjöarna Kotojärvi och Märkjärvi i Iitti. *Finskt Museum* 1973, 35-46.

Kivikäs 1995: 237-238

Miettinen 2000: 81-88

20.**MUNICIPALITY:** IITTI**SITE:** KARHUSAARI**Register number:** 142 01 0041**Year found:** 1976**Topographic map:** 3112 10 Vuolenkoski**Coordinates:** p: 6779 880, i: 3454 650, z: 80**Orientation:** E**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located in the eastern part of Lake Konnivesi, on the eastern shore of an island called Karhusaari. The painting lies along the Kymijoki river system, north of the Vuolenkoski rapids. The place is centrally located in relation to water routes. Karhusaari is a long, north-south oriented island, with high cliffs rising in its central part. The rock is today hidden by shoreline vegetation and trees, but is essentially a typical (if somewhat unimpressive) rock painting cliff. The cliff is light grey in colour and slightly concave, providing some shelter to the paintings.

Three images of elk are visible in the painting: two facing right and one facing left. All the elk are small in size (ca. 15 cm long) and painted in the 'stick-figure' style. The central part of the painting has probably included more figures, but it has flaked off due to frost erosion. The total size of the painting is only 50 x 70 cm.

Field research

1976, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 228-229

Miettinen 2000: 68-72



The painted cliff of Karhusaari.

21.

MUNICIPALITY: IITTI
SITE: KYMENKÄÄNNE

Register number: 142 01 0022

Year found: 1971

Topographic map: 3111 12 Arrajärvi

Coordinates: p: 6769 510, i: 3454 980, z: 75.9

Orientation: S

Class: 2

Description

The painting lies on the River Kymijoki water route leading from Central Finland to the Gulf of Finland, in a place where the river makes a turn towards the south (so-called Kymenkäänte). The site is a high cliff that falls directly into water, forming a small rocky peninsula in Lake Kettujärvi, through which the river Kymijoki runs.

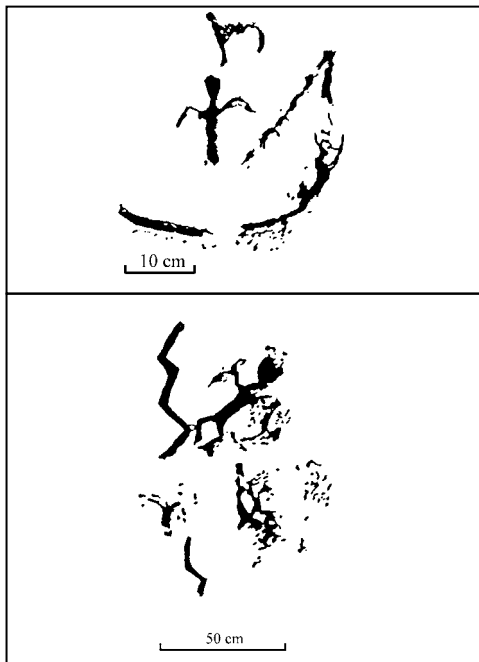
The painting does not include any recognisable figures, but judging by the colour and the location it should nonetheless be regarded a prehistoric rock painting. The shades and intensity of colour differ in the rock, suggesting that it may originally have included images. The size of the painted area is 68 x 51 cm.

Field research

1971, Inspection, Sinimarja Ojonen

Literature

Ojonen, S. 1973: Hällmålningarna vid sjöarna Kotojärvi och Märkjärvi i Iitti. *Finskt Museum* 1973, 35-46.
 Kivikäs 1995: 236
 Miettinen 2000: 96



Two scenes from Mertakallio. Tracings by S. Ojonen.

22.

MUNICIPALITY: IITTI
SITE: MERTAKALLIO

Register number: 142 01 0021

Year found: 1971

Topographic map: 3111 12 Arrajärvi

Coordinates: p: 6765 450, i: 3459 470, z: 73.9

Orientation: W

Class: 1

Description

The rock of Mertakallio lies on the northern shore of a tranquil bay of the smallish Lake Märkjärvi. The cliff, with its many fractures and peculiar shapes, is imposing even though it is not very high. The shapes include striking anthropomorphic features.

The paintings can be divided into two small groups, both of them located ca. 2.5 m above water level. The first group, on the left, consists of a human figure with hands lifted in a strange wing-like position. On top of the human figure, the remains of an animal figure - most probably an elk - facing left can be seen. The animal is fully painted and its head is missing. The human figure appears to be standing on a curving line which resembles a boat figure, but does not have the usual crew-lines. To the right of this group, a second, better preserved group is visible. This consists of a human figure painted in a ca. 45 degree angle, as if falling down, juxtaposed with a zigzag-line (snake?) on its left side. To the right of these paintings, an elk or a deer facing right can be seen. The animal is painted in stick-figure style and has thick legs and a thick neck, but a thin body.

Field research

1971, Inspection, Sinimarja Ojonen
 2003, Survey, Johanna Seppä

Literature

Ojonen, S. 1973: Hällmålningarna vid sjöarna Kotojärvi och Märkjärvi i Iitti. *Finskt Museum* 1973, 35-46.
 Kivikäs 1995: 239-241
 Miettinen 1999: 89-96



A part of the painting of Mertakallio.

23.

MUNICIPALITY: IITTI
SITE: RAUTAKANNANVUORI

Register number: 142 01 0043

Year found: 1976

Topographic map: 3112 11 Konnivesi

Coordinates: p: 6780 680, i: 3456 800, z: 79

Orientation: E

Class: 1

Description

The painting lies in the southern part of the large lake of Konnivesi, where the river system of Kymijoki begins its route towards the south and the Baltic Sea.

The paintings are found in three groups, all of them on different levels. From left to right, these include a shapeless area of strong red colour ca. 2 m above water, a fully painted elk figure in the central part of the painting, and a boat figure and some unidentifiable lines on the extreme right.

Field research

1976, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

2003, Survey, Johanna Seppä

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 231-232

Miettinen 2000: 77-80

Kivikäs 2005: 42

24.

MUNICIPALITY: ILOMANTSI
SITE: KOKKOKALLIO

Register number: 146 01 0044

Year found: 1995

Topographic map: 4242 12 Huhus

Coordinates: p: 6980 710, i: 3688 090, z: 146

Orientation: ?

Class: 2/3

Description

The site lies on the western shore of the bay of Alan-teenlahti, part of the large lake of Koitere. River Haapa-joki begins its route towards SW from the bay.

The painting consists of two winding vertical stripes side by side, at a distance of only ca. 2 cm from each other. The stripe on the left is 20 cm long and the stripe on the right is 17 cm long. The width of the stripes is ca. 1.5-2.0 cm, corresponding to the width of a human finger. The cliff includes also other, unclear patches of red, including the possible remains of two handprints at a distance of 70 cm from the stripes.

Field research

1995, Inspection, Pekka Kivikäs

Literature

-



A small boat figure at Rautakannanvuori.



The cliff of Rautakannanvuori.

25.**MUNICIPALITY:** ILOMANTSI**SITE:** KÄKLINKALLIO**Register number:** 146 01 0043**Year found:** 1995**Topographic map:** 4242 12 Huhus**Coordinates:** p: 6979 150, i: 4532 660, z: 145**Orientation:****Class:** 3/4**Description**

The cliff of Käklinkallio lies a little to the SW of the large lake of Koitere, on the western shore of the river Haapajoki, which today runs to an artificial lake in front of the power plant of Pamilo.

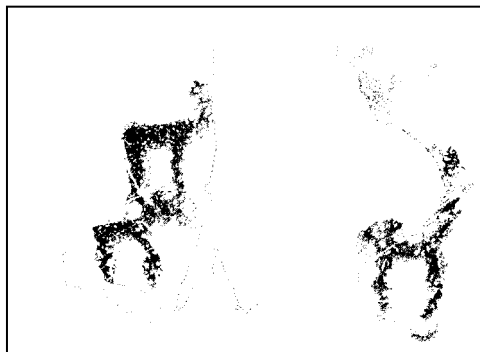
The painting consists of an area of red colour, from which no figures have been identified. It is uncertain if the colour is natural or the remains of a prehistoric rock painting. The topography and surroundings of the cliff are typical to rock paintings, but the cliff contains natural stains of red that make the definite identification of prehistoric painting remains difficult.

Field research

1995, Inspection, Pekka Kivikäs

Literature

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A tracing of the Karhusaari painting (p. 212) by Timo Miettinen.

26.**MUNICIPALITY:** JAALA**SITE:** HAUKILAHTI**Register number:** -**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3114 02 Uimila**Coordinates:** p: 6783 030, i: 3469 780, z: ca. 78.5**Orientation:** W**Class:** 2/3**Description**

The painting lies on the eastern shore of Lake Karijärvi, immediately to the south of a bay called Haukilahti.

The painted area is located on a well visible spot, in the upper part of a concave cliff that provides some shelter to the painting. The cliff rises straight from the lake.

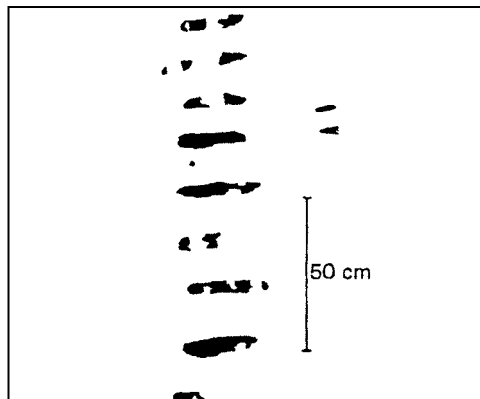
The painting consists of an area of red ochre ca. 1 x 1.5 m in size. No certain figures can be identified, but it is possible that a small human figure has been painted in the upper right corner of the area. The painted area lies ca. 1.6 m above water level,

Field research

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Literature

Miettinen 2000: 105-106



Two tracings of the Kotojärvi painting (p. 212) by Sinimarja Ojonen.

27.**MUNICIPALITY:** JAALA**SITE:** KAPASAARI**Register number:** 163 01 0003**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3114 09 Voikoski**Coordinates:** p: 6792 670, i: 3481 530, z: 79-82**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located in a small (ca. 500 m long) island called Kapasaari at the NW corner of Lake Vuohijärvi. Because the level of water of the lake has decreased since the Stone Age, the painted cliff lies today ca. 10 m from the shoreline, hidden by a thin strip of pine forest. The cliff face is formed by several horizontal shelves, ground smooth by the continental ice sheets. The highest shelf forms a ledge that protects the paintings from rain and snow. The rock face is at several places fractured into thin sheets that are in a constant danger of falling off. At a distance of about 200 m from the painting lies a massive erratic block, big enough to offer a shelter underneath.

The painted area is ca. 2 m high and 17 m wide. The most prominent image at Kapasaari is a large (50 cm high) human figure. The figure has bent knees and two horns on his head. Unusually, the male sex has been marked with a short stroke pointing downwards between the legs. Except for the horns, the head of the figure has been lost because of exfoliation of the rock. A school of fish (altogether six) and a second human figure is pictured below the large human. The second human figure is 36 cm high, with hands held up and knees bent inwards. Although the painting was found already in 1975, the fish were noticed only during a re-inspection in 1997. Four of the fish are grouped together with the human figure, two lie at some distance to the left. The painting was vandalized in 1996 with a shotgun. The smaller human figure was almost completely destroyed.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

1996, Inspection, Pirjo Uino

2000, Survey, Johanna Seppä

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 205-206

Miettinen 2000: 128-133

Miettinen, T. 2004: Jaalan esihistoriaa. *Jaalan historia*, 113-115

Kivikäs 2005: 118

28.**MUNICIPALITY:** JAALA**SITE:** KINTAHUONVUORI**Register number:** 163 01 0008**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3113 06 Oravala**Coordinates:** p: 6768 220, i: 3470 440, z: 68.3**Orientation:** S**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the NW corner of Lake Pyhäjärvi, in the area of Hausanniemi where a rock formation called Kintahuonvuori extends to the lake. The paintings lie at the southern tip of the Kintahuonvuori cliffs. The cliff face is uneven and fractured, forming shelves that progressively rise higher. The rock is coarse and rather dark. The painted cliff is almost vertical, but does not fall directly into the lake, which is located at a distance of ca. 15 metres to the south. The paintings have been made ca. 1.5 m above ground.

The painting of Kintahuonvuori consists of two boat figures. The one on the left-hand side is exceptionally large: it is 56 cm long and has altogether 12 crew-lines. The boat seems to be facing left, where the curving bottom of the boat turns vertical, possibly representing an elk-head in the prow. To the upper right of this image, at a distance of 25 cm, a second boat figure (16 cm long, with four crew-lines) can be seen. Some 60-100 cm right of this image, some remains of paint that may well have also formed a (now mostly destroyed) boat figure are barely visible.

Field research

1997, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

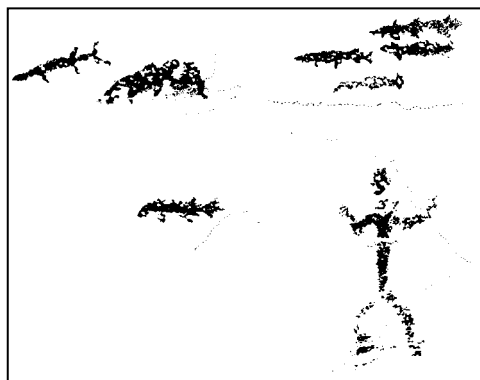
Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 68

Miettinen 2000: 97-100

Miettinen, T. 2004: Jaalan esihistoriaa. *Jaalan historia*, 105-107

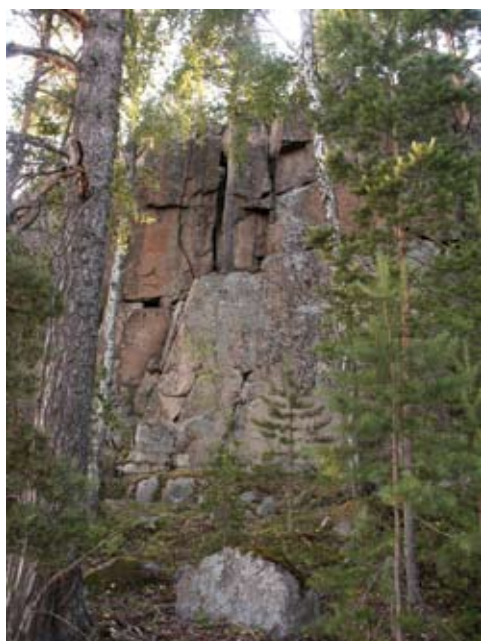
Kivikäs 2005: 37



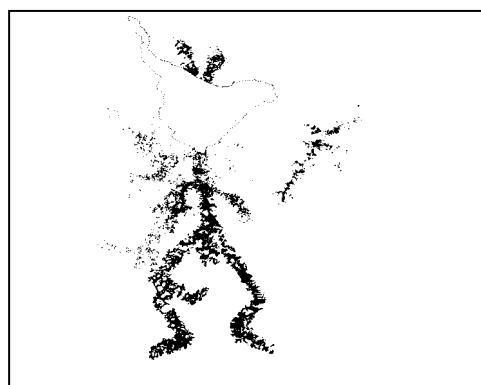
*A human figure and a school of fish from Kapasaari.
Tracing by T. Miettinen.*



A boat image at Kintahuonvuori.



The cliff of Kintahuonvuori from the lake.



A horned anthropomorph from Kapasaari. Tracing by T. Miettinen.

29.

MUNICIPALITY: JAALA

SITE: PATAKALLIO

Register number: 163 01 0007

Year found: 1978

Topographic map: 3114 05 Huhdasjärvi

Coordinates: p: 6780 910, i: 3471 520, z: 79

Orientation: WNW

Class: 1/3

Description

The site lies in the SE corner of Lake Karijärvi, near the place where a small river begins its run to Lake Kaajärvi and onwards to the Kymijoki river system. Patakallio is a high rock cliff that falls directly into water. A distinctive and striking feature is a large (diameter 4 m) pothole-shaped depression in the rock, formed by the glacial rivers. This feature has probably given the cliff its name ('Cauldron Cliff'). The rock is formed by easily eroding *rapakivi*-granite and it is divided by large cracks and fractures.

According to Timo Miettinen, a very faint human figure can be discerned in the cliff. The figure has a ring-shaped head and the male sex marked with a stroke pointing downwards between the legs. The legs are – unusually – straight. The hands are on the sides. The painting has been made inside a large crack in the rock. Some archaeologists have failed to see the painting at all and have doubted its existence. The rock also contains natural haematite, to which some of the red colour in the cliff can be assigned. However, Miettinen (2000: 107), who found the site, assures that the pigment can be seen to extend over the quartz and feldspar crystals in the rock, meaning that it is man-made.

Field research

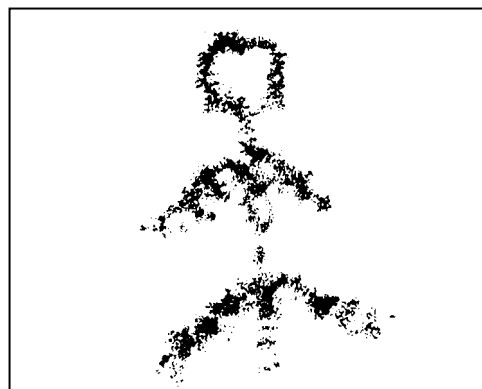
1975, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 210

Miettinen 2000: 106-108

Miettinen, T. 2004: Jaalan esihistoriaa. *Jaalan historia*, 111



The faint human figure of Patakallio according to T. Miettinen.

30.**MUNICIPALITY:** JAALA**SITE:** TUPAVUORI**Register number:** 163 01 0002**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3114 06 Pökölä**Coordinates:** p: 6791 840, i: 3479 790, z: 80**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located on a large island called Hevossaari on Lake Vuohijärvi. Tupavuori is a cliff worn smooth by continental ice sheets, rising ca. 8 m high on the western shore of the island. The cliff falls directly into water. The paintings have been made in the central part of the cliff, ca. 3.5 m above present water level.

Two images can be discerned in the Tupavuori painting: an elk facing left and a human figure positioned immediately behind it. The two clearly form a single scene. The elk is 17 cm long and may be counted as a stick-figure drawing, although its body is slightly thicker than the limbs. The legs of the elk are bent from the knees inwards. The human figure is (exceptionally) shown in profile, in a slightly squatting position, hands raised up, as if worshipping the elk. Because of the profile view, only one hand and one leg is visible. The figure is 23 cm high and has a head formed by a round spot.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

2000, Survey, Johanna Seppä

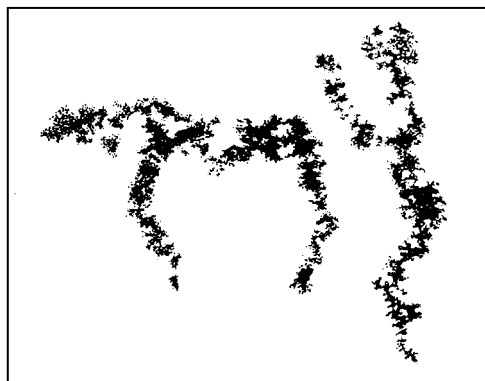
Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 204

Miettinen 2000: 125-128

Miettinen, T. 2004: Jaalan esihistoriaa. *Jaalan historia*, 112-113

Kivikäs 2005: 120



The painting of Tupavuori according to T. Miettinen.

31.**MUNICIPALITY:** JAALA**SITE:** UUTELANVUORI 1-2**Register number:** 163 01 0004**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3114 02 Uimila**Coordinates:** p: 6784 440, i: 3469 350, z: 80**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The paintings lie at the NE part of Lake Karijärvi, where a bay called Ansalahki extends to the north. The first group of paintings (Uutelanvuori 1) is located on a horizontal cliff which does not offer any significant protection from the rain. The cliff is relatively low and unimpressive, but the location in a narrow spot in a lake is typical for Finnish rock paintings. A special element of the cliff is a three-dimensional rock pillar that protrudes from the otherwise relatively flat surface. The pillar has been described as resembling the upper body of a human being facing left. At a distance of ca. 25 m to the right from the paintings, the cliff ends in a small, cave-like enclosure. The second painting group lies ca. 80 m to the south (p: 6784 32, i: 3469 39, z: 80), on relatively low and uneven cliff hidden by a stretch of forest growing on the lakeshore.

Uutelanvuori 1 consists of a stick-figure human painted on a flat surface ca. 3 m above present water level. The figure is 28 cm high, its hands are held up and legs are bent from the knees inwards. The head is a round spot. Sex seems to have been marked with a short stroke between the legs pointing downwards. To the right of this figure, a circular or ellipsoid figure has been painted on a protruding pillar in the cliff. The figure may be abstract, but given the vaguely anthropomorphic shape of the pillar, it is also possible to interpret the ring as representing the eye of the 'stone man'. Some colour has been applied also to the 'neck' and back of the head of the rock formation.

The paintings of Uutelanvuori 2 consist of a human figure and an animal figure. The human figure is ca. 42 cm high and appears to have a large, ring-shaped head. Its hands are lifted up and the position of the legs straight or slightly squatting. The figure is leaning slightly towards the left. Immediately on the right-hand side of the human figure, a fox-like animal facing left has been painted. The animal has short legs, pointy ears and a long tail. The two figures seem to form a pair. Some remains of painting can be seen to the right of the 'fox' – possibly remains of a second human figure.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

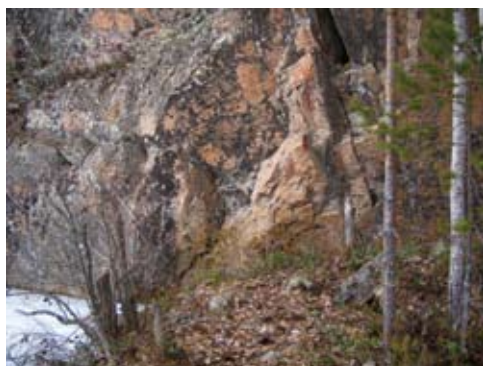
2000, Survey, Johanna Seppä

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 207-209

Miettinen 2000: 100-105

Miettinen, T. 2004: Jaalan esihistoriaa. *Jaalan historia*, 108-110



The painted 'stone pillar' of Uutelanvuori 1.



A view of Uutelanvuori 2.

32.

MUNICIPALITY: JÄMSÄ

SITE: KÄPINNIEMI

Register number: 1000004308

Year found: 1996

Topographic map: 223 11 Lahdenperä

Coordinates: p: 6871 900, i: 3380 680, z: 101-103

Orientation: N, NW, NE

Class: 2

Description

The site is located 240 m NE from the church of Kuorovesi, on a large (height ca. 5 m, width ca. 6 m) erratic block on the northern tip of a rocky cape. The site commands a great view of the lake, which is located at a distance of ca. 15 m from the boulder. Stone Age dwelling sites in the region are located on the same shore level as the boulder, suggesting that it would originally have been immediately on the shore. The boulder is locally known as *Jättiläiskivi* or Giant Stone.

Remains of painting have been observed on the NW, N and NE sides of the boulder, covering an area ca. 235 cm wide. On the NW side the red marks are located ca. 85-130 cm above ground and include a vertical line 34 cm high, possibly made with a finger (1.5 cm wide), as well as some 30 cm long stripes that may have been made with the palm. On the northern side of the block, unclear stains of red ochre can be seen ca. 144-180 cm above ground and on the NE side ca. 12-200 cm above ground.

Field research

1999, Inspection, Tuija-Liisa Soininen, Ulla Lähdesmäki, Pekka Kivikäs

2005, Survey, Timo Jussila & Timo Sepänmaa

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 52-53



A tracing (partial) by T. Miettinen of Uutelanvuori 1.



A tracing by T. Miettinen of Uutelanvuori 2.

33.

MUNICIPALITY: JOUTSA
SITE: VIHERINKOSKI A & B

Register number: 172 01 0024
Year found: 1994
Topographic map: 3122 11 Joutsa
Coordinates: p: 6847 090, i: 3457 150, z: 96
Orientation: ESE
Class: 2 & 1

Description

The paintings lie on the banks of the small rapids of Viherinkoski. The rapids mark the end point of a river running from Lake Suonne towards Lake Viherinjärvi, which begins immediately after the rapids. The strait of Viherinkoski is an important place along the waterway from Lake Päijänne via Viherinjärvi towards Lake Puulavesi. The painting of Viherinkoski A has been made on a large (ca. 8 x 5 m, height ca. 4 m) erratic boulder in the forest on the western bank of the river, ca. 20 m of the old bridge across the river. At present, the boulder lies at a distance of ca. 15 m from the river and ca. 2.7 m above its mean surface. Viherinkoski B lies ca. 150 NNE from this painting, on eastern bank of the river, on a vertical surface of a small cliff that falls directly into water (p: 6847 20, i: 3457 22, z: 96). The cliff can be seen from the opposite bank, but is difficult to access without a boat.

The paintings of Viherinkoski A are poorly preserved. According to Pekka Kivikäs, they include fragments of one or two elk figures, a human figure, traces of a handprint and some unidentifiable patches of paint. Viherinkoski B consists of two painted areas at a distance of ca. 1 m from each other. The motifs are difficult to identify, partly because the cliff is at present heavily covered by lichen. The painting seems to include a boat figure and an animal with a long, thick tail curving upwards. The latter may conceivably represent a dog or a wolf. The paintings lie between ca. 2.2 and 3.0 m above present water level.

Field research

1996, Mapping, Timo Sepänmaa

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 103



The painted boulder of Viherinkoski A.

34.

MUNICIPALITY: JUVA
SITE: ENKELINPESÄ

Register number: 178 01 0076
Year found: 1993 (1985)
Topographic map: 3144 02 Koikkala
Coordinates: p: 6845 320, i: 3533 900, z: ca. 130
Orientation: SE
Class: 2/3

Description

The painting is located on top of the Kannusvuori cliffs on the western shore of Lake Siikavesi, ca. 3 km WNW of the bridge of Maaralansalmi and ca. 200 m north of the bottom of Kannuslahti bay. The painting is located inside a cave-like space formed by three large boulders. Exceptionally for the Finnish sites, it lies ca. 55 m above present surface of water and has thus never been located immediately on the shoreline.

The painting consists of an unclear patch of red, which bears the resemblance of a human figure (ca. 80-90 cm high), but the identification is highly uncertain. A winding line can also be distinguished. The painted area lies ca. 1.1 m above ground and is ca. 1 m wide. As the 'cave' has been well-known and used as a shelter in the historical period, the painting is not necessarily prehistoric. The name of the site (Enkelinpesä) means 'Angel's Nest'. Other placenames around are also of interest. The name Kannusvuori may refer to a Saami shaman drum (*kannus*). Other 'kannus' names are located nearby.

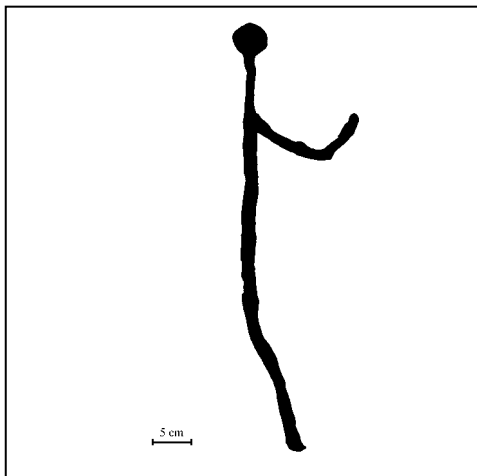
Field research

1993, Inspection, Leena Lehtinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 123

Kivikäs 1999: 27



The painting of Papinsänky according to Koponen et al. 1993.

35.**MUNICIPALITY:** JUVA**SITE:** HEPO-OJA**Register number:** 178 01 0084**Year found:** 1994**Topographic map:** 3144 02 Koikkala**Coordinates:** p: 6843 100 i: 3545 900, z: ca. 86**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the island of Pihlajasalo in the large Lake of Luonteri, close to a small brook called Hepo-oja. The coloured spot is found on a characteristic, smooth cliff face with a protective protrusion. In front of the coloured area, there is a rock terrace, standing on which the painting could have been made. The coloured area lies ca. 1-1.5 m above the terrace.

No clear figures can be distinguished in the patch of red, the size of which is ca. 30 x 60 cm. The site may be a destroyed painting, but the patch may also result from natural iron oxide. The latter is perhaps a more likely option.

Field research

1994, Survey, Timo Sepänmaa

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 313

Kivikäs 1999: 28

36.**MUNICIPALITY:** JUVA**SITE:** PAPINSÄNKY**Register number:** 178 01 0130**Year found:** 1993**Topographic map:** 3142 11 Syysjärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6845 360, i: 3533 680, z: 87.67-88.20**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The rock painting is located on the eastern shore of the bay of Kokonlahti on Lake Syysjärvi, to the NW of the large lake of Luonteri. The cliff of Papinsänky ('Priest's bed') is one of the many steep cliffs that rise on the shores of the lake. The rock is dark in colour and falls directly into water.

The painting consists of a single image, a human figure (size 62 cm) with straight legs and hands held up. The image is fragmentary: most of the left hand is missing and the left foot is also gone. The painting lies only ca. 93 cm above water.

Field research

1992, Survey, M. Koponen, R. Kupiainen & H. Poutiainen

Literature

Koponen et al. 1993.

Kivikäs 1995: 121-122

Kivikäs 1999: 27



A view of the small painted cliff of Viherinkoski B.

37.

MUNICIPALITY: JUVA
SITE: SARKASLAMPPI

Register number: 178 01 0142

Year found: 1996

Topographic map: 3144 01 Luonteri

Coordinates: p: 6832 220, i: 3549 460, z: 86.5-87.15

Orientation: WSW

Class: 1

Description

The painting lies in the wilderness Uimasalo area between Lakes Luonteri and Puuterselkä, on the SE part of a small lake called Sarkaslampi. The area of Uimasalo is very rocky, with numerous cliffs, four lakes and some smaller ponds. Sarkaslampi is the easternmost of these lakes. The lake is ca. 1 km long and 100-150 m wide. A second rock painting, that of Sarkasvuori, lies ca. 400 m NNW on the shore of the same lake.

The painting of Sarkaslampi consists of one boat figure only. The boat is ca. 30 cm long and consist of a curving line (max 5 cm thick) and six 'crew-lines' pointing upwards. The crew-lines are ca. 2 cm wide. Approximately 45 cm above the boat figure, a patch of red colour with a diameter of ca. 5 cm can be seen, suggesting that originally there can have been more figures in the painting. The painting has been damaged and blurred by the water running along the rock.

Field research

1996, Inspection, Pekka Kivikäs

1997, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 31

Maiseman muisti 2001: 159

Kivikäs 2005: 92

38.

MUNICIPALITY: JUVA
SITE: SARKASVUORI

Register number: 178 01 0003

Year found: 1983

Topographic map: 3144 01 Luonteri

Coordinates: p: 6832 610, i: 3549 300, z: 83.94-86.63

Orientation: SW

Class: 1

Description

The painting of Sarkasvuori lies in the wilderness of Uimasalo, where the high vertical cliff of Sarkasvuori rises on the lake of Sarkaslampi. The rock painting lies in the NE part of the lake; a second painting (Sarkaslampi) lies in the SE part. The cliff is lightly coloured in the place where the painting has been made. The painting lies ca. 3.6 m above the surface of Sarkaslampi.

The painting consists of a single elk figure and an unidentified figure – possibly remains of a human figure – directly on top of it. The elk (length 56 cm) and it has been painted in outline, faces left has all four legs represented. A spot representing the heart of the animal has been marked in its body. The head is disproportionately large.

Field research

1983, Inspection, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

1984, Survey, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 126-127

Kivikäs 1999: 30

Maiseman muisti 2001: 159

Kivikäs 2005: 92



A drawing of the Sarkasvuori painting by Pekka Kivikäs.

39.**MUNICIPALITY:** JYVÄSKYLÄ MLK**SITE:** HALSVUORI**Register number:** 180 01 0005**Year found:** 1979**Topographic map:** 3212 06 Puuppola**Coordinates:** p: 6918 850, i: 3438 730, z: ca. 155**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting of Halsvuori lies ca. 14 km north of the town of Jyväskylä, on the NE shore of a small pond which lies ca. 500 m east of the larger lake of Hiidenjärvi. The painting has been made on the imposing rock massif of Halsvuori – however, not on its most imposing cliff but a smaller precipice which lies close to the pond. The cliff at the place of the painting is darkly coloured and badly fractured, and leans outward enough to provide some shelter against the rain. Probably because of this, fireplaces have been kept at the root of the cliff for a very long time, which has damaged the lower parts of the cliff considerably. At the site of the pond, the cliff forms a ca. 17 m high and 20 m wide flat surface, at the foot of which there is a stretch of dry land ca. 20-30 wide before the marsh and the pond.

The painting consists of a pair of two human figures at a distance of ca. 50 cm from each other, both of which appear to be holding an animal of some sort in one hand. The hands of the human figures are raised up. The figure on the left is slightly larger (35 cm long, 22 cm wide) and holds the animal on its right hand, whereas the figure on the right (31 cm high, 19 cm wide) holds it on his left hand. The animals are small or medium-sized mammals, but the exact species are difficult to identify with certainty: fox, beaver and squirrel are possible alternatives. The figure on the left is ca. 160 cm above ground and the figure on the right is 145 cm above the ground. For a tracing, see page 64 (fig. 36).

Field research

1979, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

1987, Survey, Timo Sepänmaa

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1982: Jyväskylän Halsvuoren kallio-maalaus. *Studia minora. C. F. Meinanderin juhlakirja*, 66-71. Helsinki.

Kivikäs 1995: 222

Kivikäs 1999: 97, 68

Kivikäs 2005: 74

40.**MUNICIPALITY:** KESÄLAHTI**SITE:** JYRKÄTKALLIOT**Register number:** 248 01 0008**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 4213 07 Ruokkeenniemi**Coordinates:** p: 6868 770, i: 3644 190, z: 79.05-79.82**Orientation:** S**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the shore of Lake Puruvesi, close to the southern tip of a rocky peninsula called Poroniemi. The rock of Jyrkätkalliot ('Steep Cliffs') is a smallish cliff that falls directly into water. The possible painting lies in the western part of the cliff.

The site consists of a smallish area of bright red colour, which does not include any recognisable figures. It has been difficult to judge whether it is to be considered a prehistoric rock painting or a natural accumulation of ochre. The patch of red lies between ca. 2 and 3.5 m above present water level. Opinions concerning its authenticity are mixed – some consider it a man-made painting, others a natural accumulation of red ochre. The latter is perhaps more probable.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Matti Huurre

1997, Survey, University of Helsinki field school

2004, Survey, Petro Pesonen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 128

Kivikäs 1999: 69



A group of Scandinavian archaeologists at Halsvuori.

41.**MUNICIPALITY:** KIRKKONUMMI**SITE:** JUUSJÄRVI**Register number:** 257 01 0029**Year found:** 1963**Topographic map:** 2032 09 Vitträsk**Coordinates:** p: 6677 820, i: 3357 420, z: ca. 36-37**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the southern end of Lake Juusjärvi, on the shore of a small and narrow bay surrounded on both sides by steep cliffs. The paintings are located on the eastern shore of this fjord-like bay, on a steep cliff rising close to (but not directly from) water. There is a narrow terrace at the foot of the cliff, standing on which the paintings may have been made. The paintings are located ca. 5-6 m above the present level of Lake Juusjärvi.

The Juusjärvi painting contains some motifs that are easy to identify, but also ones that are blurred and difficult to discern. The central group includes four human figures that appear to be superimposed on earlier paintings; two (possibly three) handprints; and series of blurred and unclear figures that seem to rise upwards. The most striking of the human figures is a pair of two identical large figures (50-55 cm high), with legs crossed and hands raised. To the right of these two, a somewhat fainter human figure with raised arms and a lower body formed by a zigzag-line can be seen. Parallel to this line, there is a second zigzag-line. Above the two human figures, a fourth, smaller (size 27.5 cm) human figure has been painted with a light red hue. This human figure has a head that has a beak-like point on the left side. The raised hands recall the wings of a bird.

Under the central group, a group of two images – a ‘falling’ human and a fish – can be seen. The human has been painted in a 45-degree angle leaning towards the right. The figure has crossed legs, arms lifted up and the head is spot-shaped. The image of a fish – probably a pike – is located on the left-hand side of the human and almost touches his side. To the left of this group, remains of at least one more fish and possibly a human figure can be seen.

Field research

1963, Survey, Veikko Lehtosalo

LiteratureLuhon, V. 1962: Klippmålningen vid Juusjärvi. *Finskt Museum* 1962, 61-71.

Kivikäs 1995: 44-47

Maiseman muisti 2001: 28-29

Kivikäs 2005: 164

42.**MUNICIPALITY:** KIRKKONUMMI**SITE:** VITTRÄSK**Register number:** 257 01 0057**Year found:** 1911**Topographic map:** 2032 09 Vitträsk**Coordinates:** p: 6677 460, i: 3362 650, z: ca. 37-38**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting lies on the eastern shore of Lake Vitträsk, on the steep, high cliff of Båstadsberget, which forms a series of step-like terraces rising from the lake. The paintings are located on the second terrace, from which a fine view opens on the lake. The terrace in front of the paintings is wide enough for walking comfortably, and the paintings – which are located 0.8-1.8 m above ground – have evidently been made standing on it. The terrace lies ca. 16 m above present surface of the lake.

The best known part of the painting consists of two elaborate net-figures that are rectangular in shape, ‘decorated’ with short strokes on three sides, and with the interior filled with angular ‘decoration’. Their patterns are almost (but not entirely) identical. The net on the left hand side is almost completely preserved (size 52 x 40 cm). The second net figure is fragmentary – its upper left and lower right corners are missing.

To the right of these two figures, three less well preserved, unidentifiable remains of painting can be seen. As they feature parallel lines and a cross-like shape, they may be remains of similar net figures. Some previously unnoticed remains of painting, located 4.8 m to the left of the best preserved net figure, were reported in 2006.

Field research

1918, Inspection, Aarne Europaeus

1939, Tracing, Gustaf Hallström

1963, Survey, Veikko Lehtosalo

1992, Cleaning, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

2006, Inspection, Satu Hietala & Kari A. Kinnunen

LiteratureEuropaeus, A. 1917: Kalliomaalaus Vitträskin rannalla Kirkkonummella. *Suomen Museo* 1917, 45-51.Europaeus, A. 1922: Fornfynd från Kyrkslätt och Esbo socknar. *SMYA*. XXXII:1, 61-67.Hallström, G. 1952: Hällmålningen i Kyrkslättens socken, Finland. In *Arkeologiska forskningar och fynd: studier utgivna med anledning av H. M. Konung Gustaf VI Adolfs sjuttioårsdag 11.11.1952*, 397-409. Stockholm.

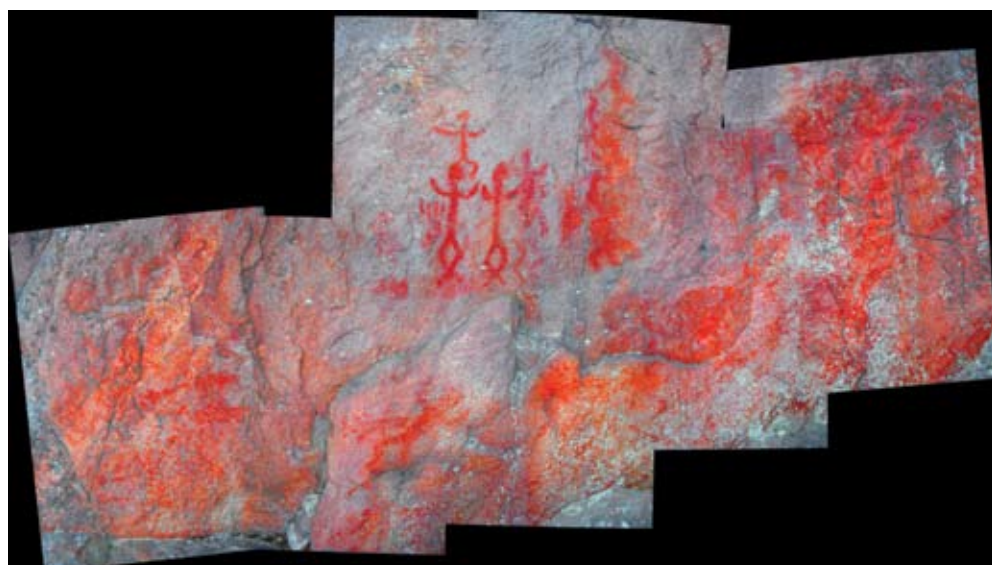
Kivikäs 1995: 41-43

Maiseman muisti 2001: 31

Kivikäs 2005: 166



A view of the Juusjärvi painting from the direction of the lake.



A retouched photomosaic of the Juusjärvi painting. The saturation of red hues has been increased to make the paintings better visible.



A group of Swedish archaeologists at Vitträsk.



The best preserved of the Vitträsk 'nets'.

43.**MUNICIPALITY:** KORPILAHTI**SITE:** RAIDANLAHTI**Register number:** -**Year found:** 1991**Topographic map:** 3211 05 Oittila**Coordinates:** p: 6876 300, i: 3434 670, z: ca. 95**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern part of the large lake of Päijänne, in the vicinity of the village of Raidanlahti. The painting is located on a large erratic boulder (ca. 3 m high and 5 m wide) on the NW slope of the rocky hill of Hakavuori. The distance to the lakeshore from the site is today ca. 250 m. There are many similar boulders at the foot of the hill. Near the painted boulder, two such boulders form a cave-like space large enough to provide shelter from rain.

The faint painting, which has been made ca. 1.0 m above ground, shows a group of five or six elk depicted in a row. The animals are fully painted and they all face left. A distinctive feature is the manner of portraying the body: the back is heavily notched and the animals are pot-bellied, resembling similar figures at the painting of Saraakallio. The three westernmost elk are best preserved and consist of two large animals (ca. 25 cm long) and one smaller elk in between the two. These are preceded by two or three fragmentary remains of painting, most probably also representing elk. Several Stone Age and Early Metal period sites are located in the immediate vicinity of the painted boulder.

Field research

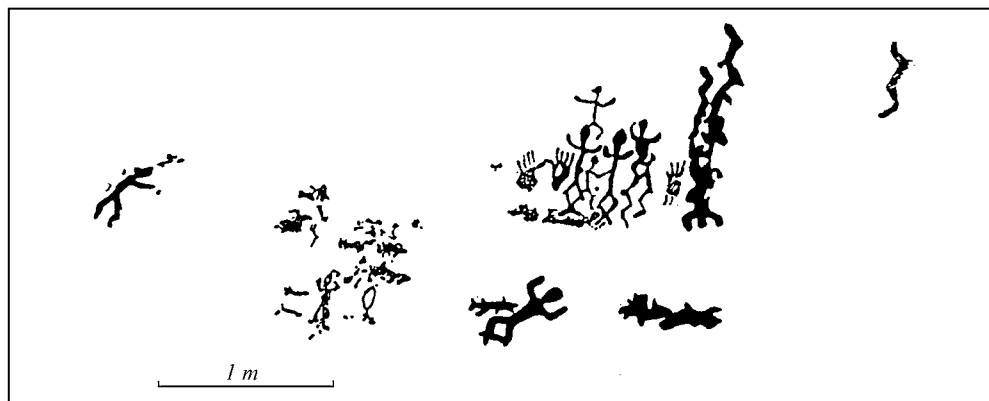
-

Literature*Arkeologia Suomessa* 1990-1992: 86-87.**44.****MUNICIPALITY:** KUHMIOINEN**SITE:** PYHÄNPÄÄ**Register number:** 291 01 0014**Year found:** 1992**Topographic map:** 2144 10 Ruolahti**Coordinates:** p: 6838 060, i: 3419 280, z: 87.28-90.70**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1**Description**

The rock painting of Pyhänpää lies in the NW part of the large lake of Päijänne (the area of Judinsalonsekkä), where a cape called Pyhänpää extends to the east. The painting is located ca. 120 m SW of the easternmost point of the cape. The painted cliff rises straight from the lake, but a narrow terrace ca. 6 m above the lake in front of the cliff makes it possible to view the paintings from dry land. Pyhänpää is an impressive, high cape, littered with boulders and steep cliffs, and with beautiful views to the open extent of Lake Päijänne.

The painting consists of two painted areas at a distance of ca. 10 m from each other. The first of these, discovered in 1992, contains no certain identifiable motifs, but some stripes that are clearly man-made can be distinguished. The second painted area, discovered in 1996, features a number of faint images, some of which are difficult to discern in dry weather. The highest figure of the painting, an oblique cross, is located way above the main group. The central figure is an outline-painting of a large (53 cm long) elk facing right. On its head, a boat figure is attached to the forehead of the animal, forming huge antlers. The boat is 61 cm long and has a curving bottom and 12 'crew-lines'. The boat seems to face left, as does a second boat figure to the upper right of the first boat. The second boat is 47 cm long and has nine crew-lines. Both boat figures have a prow marked by a heavy curve and what looks like a rudder or keel in the other end.

The painting also includes three human figures. The first of these is part of the main group, painted on the place of the back leg of the elk, so that it appears



A tracing by Ville Luho of the Juusjärvi painting.

to merge with elk. The head is a spot, the body thicker than usual (somewhat roundish), and the arms are pointing downwards. The second human is located to the lower right from the elk. It is a ca. 21 m high stick-figure, the head is a round circle, the left hand is raised up but right hand points down. To the right of this figure, a third human figure is ca. 35 cm high. The details of this figure are difficult to discern because of the lichen covering it. The figure may be holding a bow-shaped figure in its left hand.

For a tracing of the main group, see fig. 2 in [Paper V](#).

Field research

1996, Inspection, Timo Sepänmaa & Pekka Kivikäs

1997, Inspection, Mirja Miettinen

2002, Survey, Petteri Pietiläinen

Literature

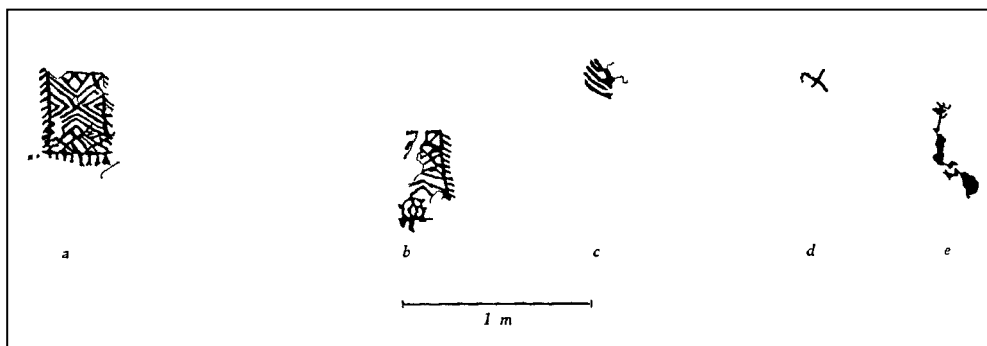
Kivikäs 1999: 100-101

Lahelma, A. 2007: 'On the Back of a Blue Elk': Recent Ethnohistorical Sources and 'Ambiguous' Stone Age Rock art at Pyhänpää, Central Finland. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 40 (2), 113-137.

Kivikäs 2005: 50



The main panel of the Pyhänpää painting. The figures are only barely visible.



A tracing made by Aarne Äyräpää of the Vitträsk paintings.

45.

MUNICIPALITY: KUHMOTINEN

SITE: PYHÄVUORI

Register number: 1000002141

Year found: 2001

Topographic map: 2144 10 Ruolahti

Coordinates: p: 6837 709, i: 3419 045, z: 97-99.5

Orientation: ESE

Class: 1

Description

The rock painting of Pyhävuori lies in the NW part of the large lake of Päijänne, ca. 500 m SW of the painting of Pyhänpää. The painting is located on a steep, rocky slope facing the lake, and lie today ca. 9 m above present water level, some tens of meters from the present shoreline. The rock here is heavily fractured, and today hidden by a strip of forest, but would have been a natural landmark when the water level was higher.

The main painted area is bright red in colour, ca. 2.5 m high and several meters wide. It does not feature any identifiable figures. About eight meters to the right of the main panel, a small figure probably representing an elk has been painted on a separate, small panel of rock. Large fragments of the rock face have broken off, possibly as a result of shooting it with a gun.

Field research

2004, Inspection, Antti Lahelma

Literature

-

46.**MUNICIPALITY:** KUHMIOINEN**SITE:** VARISVUORI**Register number:** 1000003613**Year found:** 2005**Topographic map:** 2143 09 Kuhmoinen**Coordinates:** p: 6827 696, i: 3402 969, z: 105**Orientation:** ?**Class:** 2**Description**

The painted cliff lies on the northern shore of Kuhmanniemi peninsula, on the eastern slope of the steep cliffs of Varisvuori. According to Timo Sepänmaa, the area has been an island of the Ancient Lake Päijänne.

At least four areas of red colour are discernible in the cliff. Apart from a possible print of the human left hand, no clear images can be discerned in the painting. The painted area is, however, partly covered by lichen.

Field research

2005, Inspection, Olli Soininen, Timo Sepänmaa, Pekka Kivikäs

Literature

-

47.**MUNICIPALITY:** KUUSAMO**SITE:** JULMA-ÖLKKY**Register number:** 305 01 0116**Year found:** 1978**Topographic map:** 4514 03 Julma-Ölkky**Coordinates:** p: 7274 110, i: 3607 670, z: 245**Orientation:** S**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting lies on the eastern shore of the long (3.5 km) and narrow, gorge-like Lake Julma-Ölkky in the wilderness, on a steep fractured cliff that falls straight into water. The lake makes a turn to the east at the spot where the paintings are located. The paintings lie ca. 1,2 m above the present level of the lake.

The rock painting of Julma-Ölkky is small and faint, consisting of three or possibly four images: a small outline-painting of an elk (21 cm long) facing right and two human figures – one to the left (22 cm long) of the elk and one on top of it. The human figures are simple stick-figures, with a stroke representing the head, hands on the sides, and almost straight legs. A fourth figure (another elk?) may be present to the right of the elk.

Field research

1979, Inspection, Paula Purhonen & Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

1999, Survey, M. Sarkkinen

Literature

Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1979: Suomussalmen Värkallio: kalliomaalaus Nämforsenin ja Itä-Karjalan kalliopiirrosten välissä. *Kotiseutu* 3-4/1979, 109-117.

Kivikäs 1995: 86-86



A view of the site of Pyhävuori.

48.**MUNICIPALITY:** KUUSANKOSKI**SITE:** PAKANAVUORI**Register number:** 306 01 0001**Year found:** 1974**Topographic map:** 3113 05 Kuusankoski**Coordinates:** p: 6759 620, i: 3478 180, z: 75**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located close to the town of Kuusankoski, on the eastern shore of the important river of Kymi-joki. The painted area is located on a cliff that rises on top of a steep moraine slope on the river bank. The distance to the river is at present ca. 30 m and the paintings lie ca. 12 m above water. The rock is formed by a dark, crumbling *rapakivi*-granite, not an ideal kind for painting. Immediately downstream of the painting, impressive rapids were located before the building of a power plant.

The paintings of Pakanavuori are blurred and the motifs difficult to discern. The most conspicuous of them is a human figure ca. 30 cm high, with hands raised up, legs bent inwards and a spot-shaped head. A stroke between the legs may indicate the male sex. Two animal figures can be seen to the right of the human figure, one of them probably representing an elk, while the species of the other cannot be determined. Above the human figure, a group of blurred figures seems to form an upward-rising series, reminiscent of those at Juusjärvi and Väräkallio. To the left of these paintings, there is a large area (ca. 4 m long) of relatively bright red paint, probably remains of destroyed paintings. On the extreme left of the painting, a pair of human figures

ca. 30 cm long, are very faintly visible. Both of them have only one hand and a part of the body preserved. The heads of the figures are spot-shaped and the legs are bent from the knees inwards. The surviving hand of the figure on the left points down, while the figure on the right has its right hand raised up.

The name Pakanavuori ('Pagan Mountain') is interesting. According to local tradition, the hill was named so because "in days of old, the pagans danced and did their things" on its summit (Miettinen 2000: 112).

Field research

1974, Survey, Timo Miettinen

1981, Inspection, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 243-245

Kivikäs 1999: 68

Miettinen 2000: 109-112

Kivikäs 2005: 36



The crumbling cliff of Pakanavuori.



A view of the site of Julma-Ölkky from the opposite shore of the long and narrow lake.

49.**MUNICIPALITY:** LAMMI**SITE:** HOPEAKALLIO**Register number:** 1000002116**Year found:** 1998**Topographic map:** 2134 04 Lammi**Coordinates:** p: 6774 070, i: 3397 790, z: ca. 104**Orientation:** SSE**Class:** 2**Description**

The painting is located on the northern shore of Lake Pääjärvi, on the southern side of a smallish, steep cliff that rises straight from the lake. There are prominent quartz veins visible in the cliff.

The painting is an area of red colour, located ca. 2 m above the lake surface. The largest uniform stain of red ochre is ca. 1.30 m high and 1.4 m wide, and the entire painted area is ca. 2.4 m wide. There are no clear figures, but the layer of paint is thick and the painting clearly man-made.

Field research

1998, Inspection, Timo Miettinen & Pekka Kivikäs
2004, Inspection, Tuula Heikkurinen-Montell & Helena Taskinen

Literature

-



The painting of Hopeakallio.

50.**MUNICIPALITY:** LAPPEENRANTA**SITE:** KELTAVUORI**Register number:** 405 01 0015**Year found:** 1976**Topographic map:** 3133 05 Pulsa**Coordinates:** p: 6759 840, i: 3556 400, z: 57-58**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located south of the Salpausselkä ridges, on the southern shore of the smallish lake of Humaljärvi. The paintings have been made between ca. 1.0 and 2.5 m above water.

The painted area is ca. 10 m long, with three different groups of images. A faint human figure, with hands raised up, is visible in the extreme right of the painting. Associated with this figure is a series of four vertical strokes that may be abstract lines but might conceivably also represent human figures in profile. In the central portion of the painting, a human figure (44 cm long) with a circular head, hands raised and feet bent from the knees may be seen. On the left-hand side of the figure, a zig-zagging line (62 cm long) possibly representing a snake is depicted. It looks almost as if the human figure is holding the 'snake' in its left hand. In the right end of the painting, a human figure with short horns on its head can be found. The figure, which is uncharacteristically 'angular' in shape, is 41 cm long.

Field research

1976, Inspection, Matti Huurre, Pekka Sarvas & Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

Literature

Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1977: Die Felsbilder von Keltavuori bei Lappeenranta. Ein neues Beispiel finnischer Felsmalereien. *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 7/1977, 211-215.
Kivikäs 1995: 154-157
Kivikäs 2005: 154



The cliff of Keltavuori.

51.

MUNICIPALITY: LAPPEENRANTA
SITE: SALMENVUORI

Register number: 405 01 0016

Year found: 1980

Topographic map: 3133 03 Huomola

Coordinates: p: 6768 270, i: 3548 660, z: 76.3-78.9

Orientation: ENE

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on Lake Jängynjärvi, on a cliff that rises on the western shore of the narrow strait of Lavosensalmi. The strait is located along an important, east-west -running water route. Salmenvuori is an imposing, vertical cliff, divided by long fractures that cross the entire cliff.

The paintings of Salmenvuori are fragmentary and many of them are difficult to identify. The best preserved area shows a fully painted elk facing right and a fragmentary human figure positioned behind it. The elk is unusually naturalistic, and may have horns on its head. Only the head and right hand of the human figure have been preserved. The hand reaches out to touch the hind of the elk. A number of other possible human figures are also present, but they are too fragmentary to be clearly identified. To the right of this group, two pairs of boat figures are faintly visible. The first pair consists of partially destroyed images (32 and 37 cm long) ca. 1.6 m above water. The second pair is located higher up, ca. 3.5 m above water. The larger of the boats is 50 cm long and has 8 crew-lines, the smaller boat, located slightly lower, is 31 cm long.

Field research

1980, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 161-163

Kivikäs 2005: 136

52.

MUNICIPALITY: LAUKAA
SITE: ISO-KUHAJÄRVI

Register number: 1000 00 0356

Year found: 2001

Topographic map: 3212 09 Vihtavuori

Coordinates: p: 6919 112, i: 3445 113, z: 85

Orientation: ?

Class: 2

Description

The painting lies on the eastern shore of Lake Iso Kuhajärvi, inside a small semi cave formed by large boulders. The cave lies in the E-W direction, its height is 2.1 m, depth 2.5 m and the maximum width 0.63 m. The paintings have been made on the left (northern) wall of the cave, on a spot where some quartz veins can be seen in the rock.

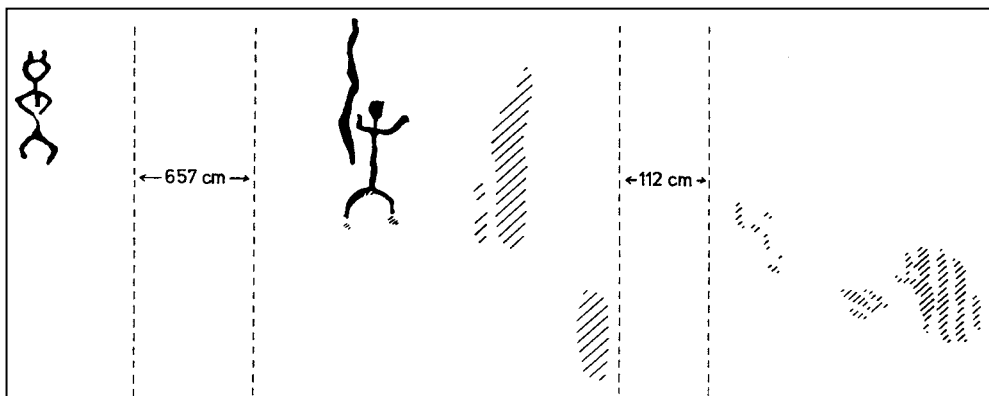
The painting consists of two stripes of red ochre at a distance of 8 cm from each other. The marks are 32 cm long and 3-5 cm wide. A third mark of red ochre (size 32 x 26 cm) has been painted above the curving lines. The marks do not appear to show any recognisable figures.

Field research

2003, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 73



A tracing of the Keltavuori painting by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen.

53.**MUNICIPALITY:** LAUKAA**SITE:** SARAAKALLIO I**Register number:** 410 01 0004**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3221 07 Laukaa**Coordinates:** p: 6924 000, i: 3448 340, z: 89.95-101.70**Orientation:** SW, WNW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site lies on the eastern shore of Lake Saraavesi, opposite the village center of Laukaa. The rocky cliff of Saraakallio is an impressive landmark rising on the shore of the lake. An important water route runs in front of the painting. The paintings can be accessed from dry land, as the rock is today separated from water by a thin stretch of forest. A second area of paintings, Saraakallio II, lies ca. 250 SE of the main panels.

It is difficult to count and list all the paintings of Saraakallio, partly because they are so many and varied, partly because many of them are blurred, fragmentary or have been painted over. The following list, which proceeds from left to right, is by no means exhaustive. Only the best preserved paintings are listed. The paintings are here divided into 20 different groups, with altogether 60 identified figures. They could have been grouped differently, and the number of painting motifs identified at Saraakallio varies according to different sources from ca. 50 to more than 100. The number presented here is probably too small.

- 1) An oblique cross, a boat figure and an elk;
- 2) a group consisting of a double boat, the lower part of which has triangular 'crew-lines' (13 of them) and

the upper part by the usual short strokes (16 of them), and two human figures and an elk facing left under the double boat;

- 3) a two-headed elk with a back made of triangles to the right of the double boat;
- 4) a boat and some unidentified fragments of painting (the lowest part of the painting);
- 5) a group of ten (?) boat figures and a zigzag-line on a surface of reddish rock which makes it difficult to discern the details of the boats (at least one of which has triangular crew-lines);
- 6) two boats and a 'wolf-like' human figure in profile on a panel to the lower right of the ten boats;
- 7) an oblique cross and four fully painted elk facing east;
- 8) a group of parallel, vertical zigzag-lines (or human figures?) ca. 50 cm wide, located on the upper terrace;
- 9) two human stick-figures below the parallel lines, one shown in profile and one in frontal view;
- 10) a 'bird-headed' human figure and a and possibly two or three human figures;
- 11) a large painted area, consisting of a handprint, two vertical lines, a fully painted elk (24 cm) facing left with a human figure positioned behind it, and a large outline-painted elk facing left underneath;
- 12) the main painted panel, with a pair of handprints (17 cm long), two small elk, fully painted and facing left (the other has a back made of five triangles), a large elk painted in outline (36 cm long, 27 cm high) facing left, a human stick-figure with out-stretched arms and numerous fragments of paintings;
- 13) below the main panel, a group of at least four human figures with raised arms;
- 14) to the right of these, a fragmentary outline-painting of an elk facing left;
- 15) a group of figures consisting of a zigzag-line, two



A view of Lake Saraavesi from the upper terrace of Saraakallio.

boat figures (34 and 41 cm long) and a human 20 cm long human stick figure (and possibly two others); 16) a group of three human figures pictured in profile (the central figure is 24 cm long); 17) to the right of these, an outline figure of an elk facing left; 18) to the upper right, an elk-boat hybrid figure (48 cm long) with a back made of triangles (four of them); 19) a naturalistic image of an elk, painted in outline and facing left, length 49 cm; and 20) a group consist of an image of a snake (?) and a lizard (?).

Field research

1975, Inspection, Mirja Miettinen
 1978, Tracing, Mirja Miettinen
 1979, Tracing, Pekka Sarvas & J.-P. Taavitsainen
 1982, Tracing, Mirja Miettinen
 1985, Survey, Timo Jussila

Literature

Autio, E. 1988: Laukaan Saraakallio - muinainen pyhättö. *Kotiseutu* 4/1988, 164-168.
 Kivikäs, P. 1990: *Saraakallio. Muinaiset kuvat*. Atena.
 Vilkuna, J. 1993: Laukaan esihistoriaa. *Kohisevien koskien Laukaa*, 9-32.
 Kivikäs 1995: 214-221
 Kivikäs 1999: 89-96
 Kivikäs 2005: 58-72



A double boat figure, part of group 2 at Saraakallio



The most intensely painted panel (group 12) at Saraakallio and a tracing of the panel made by Timo Miettinen (below; photo: National Board of Antiquities).

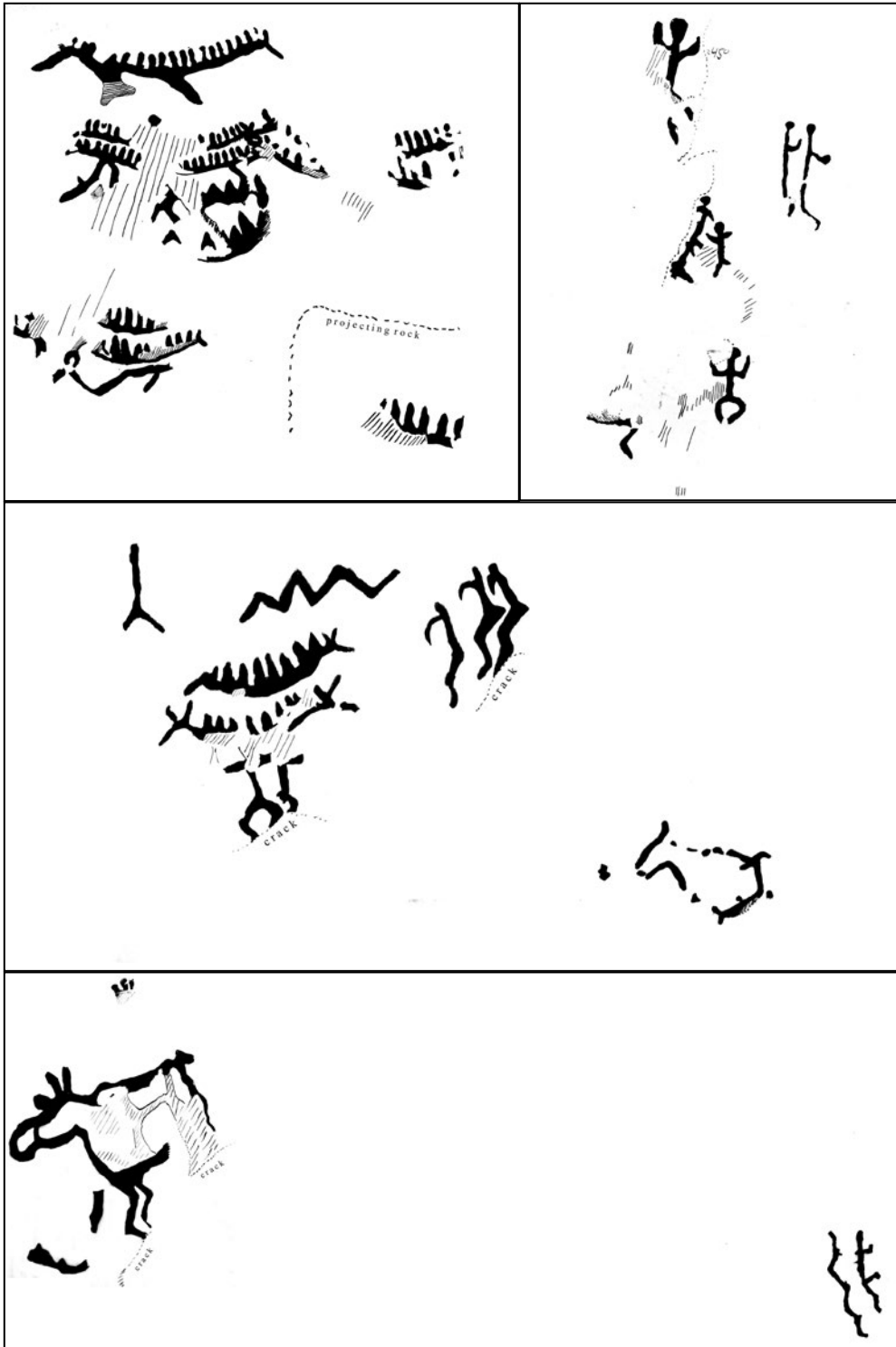


An elk figure on the upper terrace of Saraakallio (group 19).



A view of Saraakallio from the lake.





A group of previously unpublished tracings of Saraakallio paintings made by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen and Pekka Sarvas in the 1970's, showing group 5 (top left), 13 (top right), 15 & 16 (middle) and 19 & 20 (bottom). Different scales.

54.**MUNICIPALITY:** LAUKAA**SITE:** SARAAKALLIO II**Register number:** 410 01 0004**Year found:** 1989**Topographic map:** 3221 07 Laukaa**Coordinates:** p: 6923 830, i: 3448 540, z: 97.10-98.80**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

Saraakallio is a rugged precipice on the eastern shore of lake Saraavesi. Panel II lies ca. 250 m SE from the main panel (Saraakallio I), at a distance of ca. 40 m from the lakeshore.

The painted panel contains remains of several paintings, most of which are very fragmentary and difficult to identify.

Field research

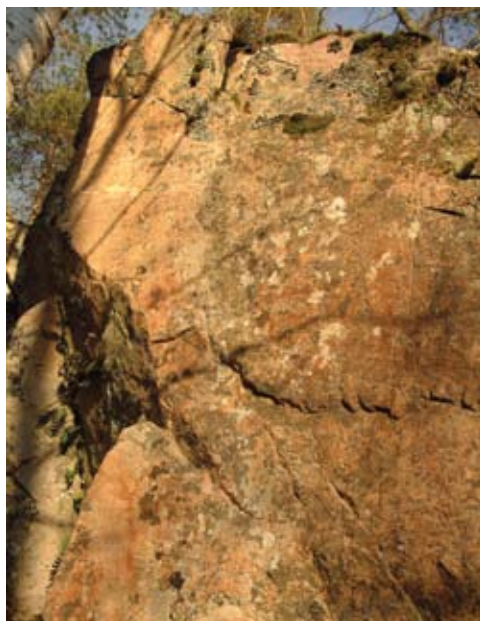
1993, Inspection, Mirja Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 220-221

Kivikäs 1999: 96

Maiseman muisti 2001: 211-212



The Saraakallio II panel.

55.**MUNICIPALITY:** LAUKAA**SITE:** UITTOVUORI**Register number:** 410 01 0051**Year found:** 1999**Topographic map:** 3214 03 Kuuhankavesi**Coordinates:** p: 6919 780, i: 3461 390, z: 98**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is located in the NW part of the island of Paanalansaari, which lies between Lakes Kynsivesi and Leivonvesi. The water route of Rautalammi runs by the painting. The paintings have been made on the western face of the Uittovuori cliff, on a terrace that lies ca. 10-11 m above water.

The painting consists of three rather unusual figures: three diagonal lines, a circle and a 'robust' human figure (25 cm long), apparently with two horns on its head and hands and feet that form strangely circular shapes. The figure differs greatly from typical human figures in Finnish rock art.

Field research

1999, Inspection, Timo Sepänmaa

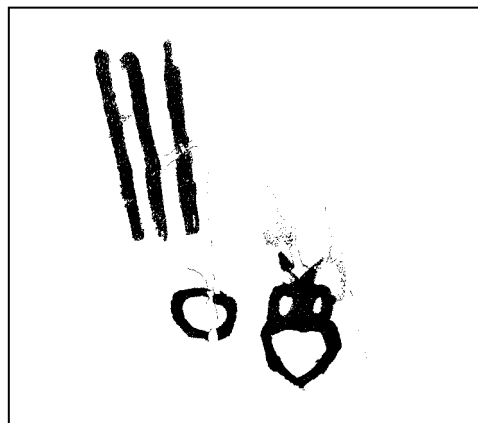
Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 98-99

Kivikäs 2005: 75



Group 18 at Saraakallio I. Tracing by P.Sarvas and J.-P. Taavitsainen.



The Uittovuori painting as copied by P. Kivikäs.

56.**MUNICIPALITY:** LEMI**SITE:** HAUKKASAARI**Register number:** 416 01 0008**Year found:** 1998**Topographic map:** 3131 12 Huuhtsalo**Coordinates:** p: 6767 820, i: 3537 230, z: 77**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located on Lake Kivijärvi, on the eastern shore of a small island (Haukkasaari).

The painting consists of two marks of red ochre that probably derive from the destroyed rock paintings. No distinct images can be identified, however.

Field research

-

Literature

-

57.**MUNICIPALITY:** LEMI**SITE:** ILMUKSENVUORI**Register number:** 416010007**Year found:** 1998**Topographic map:** 3131 12 Huuhtsalo**Coordinates:** p: 6767 400, i: 3537 670, z: 77**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 3**Description**

The site is located on a steep waterfront cliff in a small, rocky peninsula in the north-western part of Lake Kivijärvi. When the level of water was higher up, the peninsula would have been an island. The cliff consists of rapakivi-granite and some parts of it have eroded into strange-looking pillars. The cliff appears anthropomorphic in shape.

There are no clear paintings at this site, only faint traces that may or may not be prehistoric rock paintings.

Field research

-

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 140



The cliff of Ruominkapia seen from the strait.

58.

MUNICIPALITY: LEMI
SITE: LINNAsAARI

Register number: 416 01 0009

Year found: 1997

Topographic map: 3133 03 Huomola

Coordinates: p: 6765 880, i: 3540 220, z: 77.7

Orientation: WSW

Class: 1/2

Description

The site is located on Lake Kivijärvi, on the North-Western shore of a small, rocky island called Linna-saari. The island is high and has steep shores and acts as a natural landmark. However, the painted area is not on the most impressive part of the cliff. The lake is part of an important waterway from Lake Saimaa towards the Kymijoki River.

The painting consists of a single vertical line, possibly a fragmentary human figure.

Field research

-

Literature

Suviranta, S. Linnasaaren vartija. *Hiidenkivi* 6/1997, 7.

59.

MUNICIPALITY: LEMI
SITE: RUOMINKAPIA

Register number: 416 01 0004

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 3133 03 Huomola

Coordinates: p: 6769 890, i: 3542 660, z: 76

Orientation: SW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located in a narrow, NE-SW –oriented strait (Ruominkapia) on Lake Kivijärvi, on the steep precipice of Haikkaanvuori. Some of the paintings can be viewed from a narrow strip of dry land in front of the cliff, but some are located on a cliff face that falls directly into the lake.

The painted area is ca. 7 m long and consists of three groups of images on two different levels (between 1.0 and 2.8 m above water). On the far left, at least two elk painted in outline and facing right and some fragments perhaps of more elk are seen. The central part, which is located higher up, consists of two boat images, a rake-like figure and a possible image of a bird. On the right hand end of the panel, a group of elk painted in outline and facing left are seen. This group also includes two human figures (one with horns on its head) and a vertically positioned boat figure.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

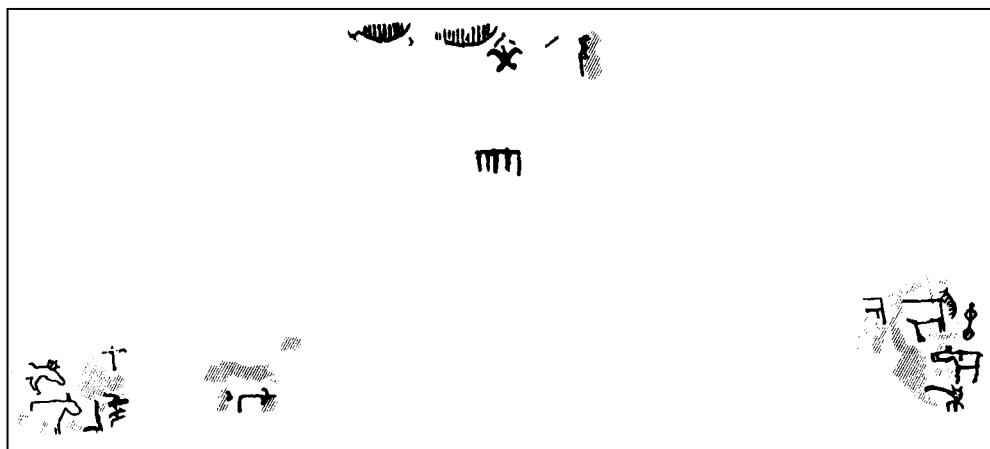
Literature

Sarvas, P. & Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1976. Kallio-maalauksia Lemiltä ja Ristiinasta. *Suomen Museo* 83, 30-52.

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 164-168

Kivikäs 2005: 137



A tracing of the Ruominkapia paintings by P. Sarvas & J.-P. Taavitsainen.

60.**MUNICIPALITY:** LEMI**SITE:** VENÄNNIEMI**Register number:** 416 01 0005**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 313303 Huomola**Coordinates:** p: 6766 540, i: 3540 170, z: 76.5**Orientation:** E**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the easternmost point of a large island (Suursaari) on Lake Kivijärvi, where a relatively low but steep rock cliff lies partly hidden by trees. A narrow (ca. 2 m) strip of dry land on the in front of the cliff makes it possible to access the paintings without the use of a boat.

The painted area is long and has included many images, but the rock is dark grey in colour and badly worn, making it difficult to identify the paintings. The clearest images consist of three handprints, two boat figures and a pair of human figures. Some fragments of quartz (NM 35465: 1-4) were found in shallow water in front of the painting in 2005.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

2005, Survey, University of Helsinki field school

LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 169-171

61.**MUNICIPALITY:** LOHJA**SITE:** KARSTUN LINNAVUORI**Register number:** 444 01 0028**Year found:** 1991**Topographic map:** 2023 10 Sammatti**Coordinates:** p: 6691 210, i: 3330 650, z: 42.13-42.80**Orientation:** SSE**Class:** 2/3**Description**

The site is located in the northern part of Lake Lohjanjärvi, near the bay of Karstunlahti, on a mighty precipice on the SE part of the cliff of Linnämäki. A series of step-like protrusions in the cliff are located below the painting and make it possible to reach up to the painted spot. The distance to the lake from the painting is ca. 500 metres to SW.

The painting consists of vertical stripe of red ochre with no identifiable figures.

Field research

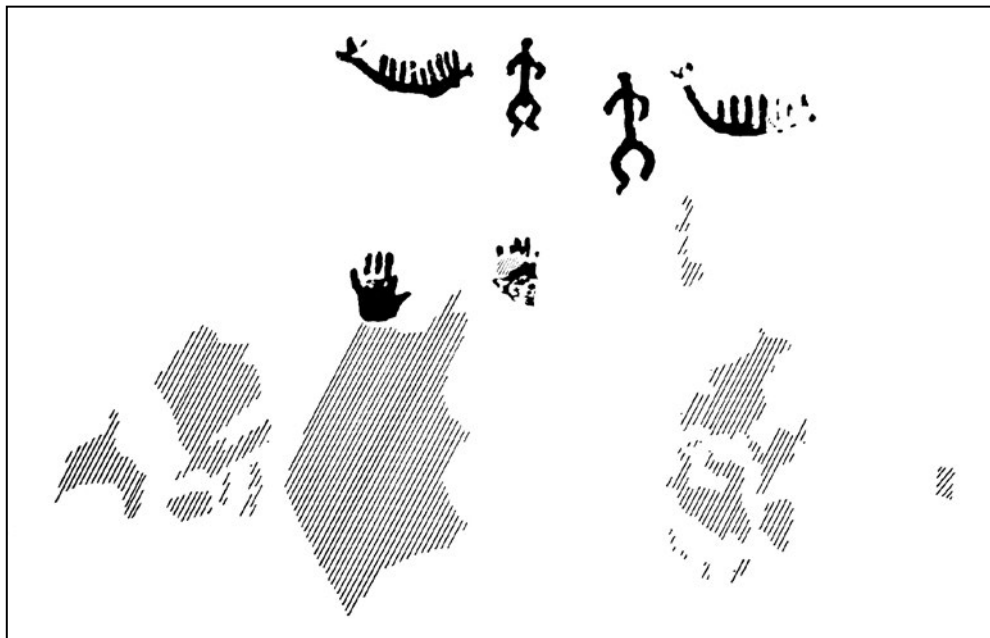
1991, Survey, Petro Pesonen

1996, Survey, Petteri Pietiläinen

2000, Inspection, Jyri Saukkonen

Literature

-



A tracing of the Venänniemi painting by Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen.

62.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUHANKA**SITE:** AVOSAARI**Register number:** 435 01 0022**Year found:** 1976**Topographic map:** 3122 05 Kammiovuori**Coordinates:** p: 6847 260, i: 3430 960, z: 87**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern part of Lake Päijänne, on the western shore of the large island of Avosaari.

The cliff (Varpusenlinna), which is surrounded by numerous large boulders, is located on the lakeshore, but there is a small terrace in front of the painting from which it can be accessed (with some difficulty).

The painted area is ca. 75 cm high and 80 cm wide and consists of three figures, apparently all representing elk that face left. The best preserved figure shows a 'fat' elk with some kind of internal division (organs?) in the body. The other two are poorly preserved.

Field research

1976, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

1996, Mapping, Timo Sepänmaa & Pekka Kivikäs

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 223-224

Kivikäs 1999: 102

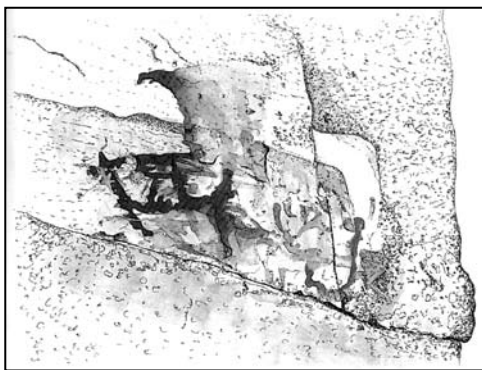
Kivikäs 2005: 54



The cliff of Venäinniemi lies hidden by the forest on the left. The author stands in the distance at a spot where a quartz artefact was found. Photo: Teemu Mökkönen.



The painted cliff of Venäinniemi.



A drawing of the painting of Avosaari by P. Kivikäs.



The painting of Karstun linnavuori is located approximately in the middle of the picture.

63.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUOPIOINEN**SITE:** SALMINKALLIO**Register number:** 439 01 0028**Year found:** 1987**Topographic map:** 2141 10 Luopioinen**Coordinates:** p: 6805 972, i: 3378 262, z: 92**Orientation:** SSE**Class:** 1**Description**

The painting is geographically located far to the west of the main rock painting region, in the northern part of Lake Kukkia, in a narrow strait (Kuivassalmi) between the island of Evinvalo and the mainland. The painted cliff is ca. 20 m high. The lakeshore is ca. 30 m to the south of the cliff, the root of which lies ca. 6 m above the present level of the lake. There is a Stone Age dwelling site ca. 60 m WNW of the painting.

The painted area is a fractured part of the cliff and includes at least a human figure holding a zigzag-line (sake?) in the upper right, a long vertical line that closely follows a vertical crack in the rock, and two human figures in the lower right of the painting.

For a tracing, see fig. 30b on page 57.

Field research

1987, Tracing, Tapio Seger, J-P. Taavitsainen, IlkkaToivonen

1998, Inspection, Tuula Heikkurinen-Montell

2004, Survey, Miikka Haimila

Literature

Keskitalo, O. 1985. Esihistoria. *Hauhon, Luopioisten ja Tuuloksen historia*, 79-224.

Kivikäs 1995: 225-227

Kivikäs 2005: 52

64.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** IEVASVUORI**Register number:** 441010013**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3131 09 Pentti**Coordinates:** p: 6763 210, i: 3520 090, z: 77.6-79.5**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the western shore of Lake Hii-järvi, where the relatively low cliff of Ievasvuori rises on the lakeshore. A narrow strip of dry land is found in front of the cliff.

The paintings are very poorly preserved. The easiest to discern is a geometric motif consisting of angular lines, located under a protruding part of the cliff. It is also possible to discern a faint human figure.

Field research

1997, Inspection, Jukka Luoto

1999, Excavation, Jukka Luoto

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 146



Ievasvuori.



A view of the cliff of Salminkallio and the terrace in front of it.

65.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** INKILÄ**Register number:** 441 01 0004**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 3131 09 Pentti**Coordinates:** p: 6769 240, i: 3520 100, z: 79**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 2/3**Description**

The site is located on eastern shore of Lake Tuohitiainen, on a small precipice, which can be accessed from a terrace in front of it.

When the site was found in 1980, it featured according to the finder Timo Miettinen a human figure and an area of red paint. The human figure apparently could still be seen in the beginning of the 1990's, but has since then been completely destroyed due to the natural erosion of the rock cliff.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 173



The destroyed painting of Inkilä lies immediately to the right of the cottage.

66.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** KALAMANIEMI 1**Register number:** 441 01 0010**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 3131 09 Pentti**Coordinates:** p: 6767 470, i: 3520 640, z: 76.5**Orientation:** S**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the northern shore of the Kalamansalmi strait between lakes Kelkjärvi and Tuohitiainen. The strait is part of a long water route leading from Lake Saimaa towards the Kymijoki river system. The route makes turn at the site of the cliff, which forms a natural landmark.

The painting is badly worn and faint, and as the cliff itself is rather dark and reddish, the painted motifs are difficult to discern. The images include an elk, a boat and a human figure, possibly also remains of other figures.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 173-174

Kivikäs 2005: 144



A tracing of Kalamaniemi 1 by T. Miettinen.



Kalamaniemi 1.

67.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** KALAMANIEMI 2**Register number:** 441 01 0003**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 313109 Pentti**Coordinates:** p: 6767 970, i: 3520 410, z: 78.15**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the western shore of the Kalamasalmi strait between lakes Kelkjärvi and Tuohitiainen, ca. 500 m NNW of the painting of Kalamaniemi 1.

The painting consists of two human figures, two boats and an elk. Because of the rather dark, reddish colour of the cliff, the faint paintings are very difficult to discern. A small excavation was conducted at the foot of the cliff in 1999. Finds included a few pieces of flint, quartz and burnt bone (NM 31547). Their relation to the painting is, however, uncertain as a C14-dating of charcoal from the excavations indicates that they may be relatively late (16th century AD).

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

1999, Excavation, Jukka Luoto & Johanna Lindh

LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 175-176

Kivikäs 2005: 144

68.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** MUURAISSUORET**Register number:** 441 01 0002**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 3131 12 Huuhtsalo**Coordinates:** p: 6762 980, i: 3532 860, z: 77.5**Orientation:** E**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the western part of Lake Kivijärvi, on the eastern shore of a peninsula called Kokkonniemi.

The painting consists of a single boat figure that apparently has an elk head in the prow.

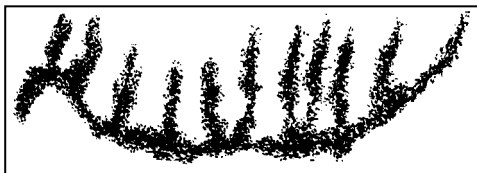
Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 172, 302

Kivikäs 2005: 143



The boat figure of Muuraisvuoret.



Kalamaniemi 2.

69.

MUNICIPALITY: LUUMÄKI

SITE: MYLLYOJA

Register number: 441010006**Year found:** 1985**Topographic map:** 313106 Kannuskoski**Coordinates:** p: 6766 050, i: 3519 090, z: 80**Orientation:** SSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern bank of a small brook (Myllyoja) that runs into Lake Tuhtiainen. The painted spot is on a steep cliff that borders an area of wetlands. The painted spot is in the SE part of the cliff. When the level of water was higher, the cliff would have been positioned along a water route running from lake to lake. Now, however, the nearest lake (Myllylampi) is located ca 70 m SE.

The painting consists of two well-preserved images of boats and a fragmentary image that seems to be a human figure, as well as two red spots of paint that feature no identifiable images.

Field research

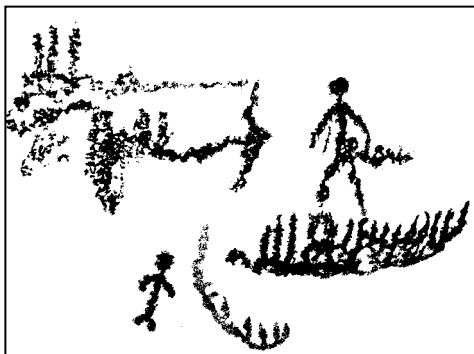
1987, Inspection, J.-P. Taavitsainen & Tapio Seger

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 179

Kivikäs 2005: 148



A tracing of Kalamaniemi 2 by T. Miettinen.



Two boat figures and a human at Myllyoja.

70.

MUNICIPALITY: LUUMÄKI

SITE: RANTOMÄKI

Register number: 441 00 0002**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3131 06 Kannuskoski**Coordinates:** p: 6764 400, i: 3519 830, z: 78**Orientation:** ?**Class:** 3**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of Lake Hiijärvi, in a small bay called Jokilahti.

The painting consists of some remains of red colour, possibly including a human figure. The identification of the figure is uncertain, however, and the painting might also be a natural stain.

Field research

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Literature

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A tracing of Myllyoja painting by T. Miettinen.

71.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** SILIÄVUORI**Register number:** 441 01 0005**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 3132 04 Viuhkola**Coordinates:** p: 6770 700, i: 3519 280, z: 77**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is a particularly impressive, smooth, lightly coloured rock cliff rising on the eastern shore of Lake Virmojärvi.

The painting is rather large painting. It is, however, is badly worn and difficult to decipher. The clearest images consist of a stick-figure elk facing left, an elk painted in outline (also facing left), an oblique cross and a pair of human figures, one larger than the other. A large area of red paint surrounds a high vertical 'opening' in the cliff on the right hand side of the painting.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 177-178

Kivikäs 2005: 150

72.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** VALKJÄRVI**Register number:** 441 00 0001**Year found:** 1996**Topographic map:** 3133 02 Suo-Anttila**Coordinates:** p: 6752 640, i: 3549 720, z: ?**Orientation:** W**Class:** 3/4**Description**

The site is located on the western side of a high cliff overlooking the small lake of Valkjärvi, far to the south from the large lake systems of Eastern Finland.

A single mark of red ochre, possibly representing a snake, has been reported at this site. Its prehistoricity, however, is uncertain.

Field research

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Literature

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The imposing precipice of Siliävuori.

73.**MUNICIPALITY:** LUUMÄKI**SITE:** VASKIVUORI**Register number:** 441 01 0001**Year found:** 1980**Topographic map:** 3133 02 Suo-anttila**Coordinates:** p: 6751 700, i: 3545 280, z: 58**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on a cliff located on the eastern shore of Lake Elkiänjärvi. The cliff rises straight from water and is only accessible by boat or from the winter ice.

The painting includes several fragmentary remains of paintings, including one horned anthropomorph and two parallel zigzag-lines.

Field research

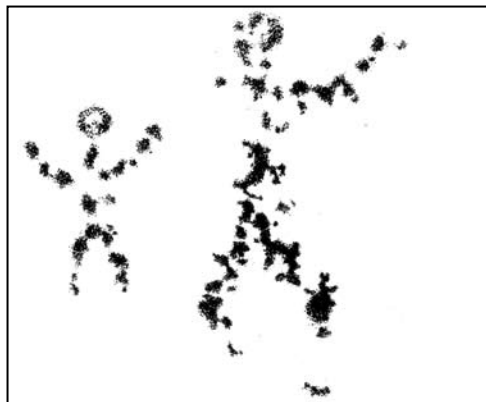
1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1992: Luumäen esihistoria. *Luumäen historia*, 23-33.

Kivikäs 1995: 158-159

Kivikäs 2005: 156

**74.****MUNICIPALITY:** MIEHIKKÄLÄ**SITE:** RISTNIEMENVUORI**Register number:** 489 01 0031**Year found:** 1999**Topographic map:** 3131 10 Luotosenjärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6742 700, i: 3537 620, z: 55**Orientation:** NE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the shore of Lake Metsäisenjärvi, on a cliff that falls directly into the lake.

The painting consists of a poorly preserved, large (87 cm high) human figure, which appears to hold a zigzag-line in each hand. Ca. 9 m to the left there is apparently a second similar human figure, but its preservation is even worse. Some remains of painting are present also 3 m further to left. A fourth painted area lies ca. 200 m NE of the human figure. For a drawing of the main human figure, see fig. 30d on page 57.

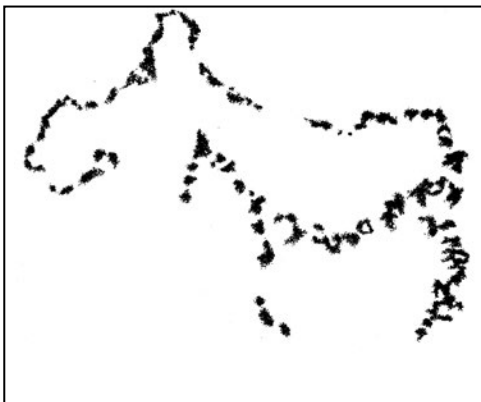
Field research

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Literature

Miettinen 2000: 147-151

Kivikäs 2005: 158



Two tracings of the Siliävuori paintings by T.Miettinen.



The cliff of Ristniemenvuori.

75.**MUNICIPALITY:** MIKKELI (FORMERLY ANTTOLA)**SITE:** TIKASKAARTEENVUORI**Register number:** 014 01 0002**Year found:** 1988**Topographic map:** 3144 01 Luonteri**Coordinates:** p: 6839 510, i: 3541 460, z: 85.4**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site of Tikaskaarteenvuori is located in the SW part of the island of Pihlajasalo at Lake Luonteri. The cliff is of a roundish shape but clearly stands out in the surrounding landscape, even though it is today partly hidden by a narrow strip of vegetation and trees. The paintings area is situated ca. 10 m above present water level, on a light surface of rock. A narrow rock terrace is located in front of the paintings. However, to reach the terrace, the use of ladders or a rope is required. The highest point in Southern Savo, Neitvuori, is located on the opposite shore of the lake.

The painted area is 3.7 m wide, but much of it is faint and blurred, with large areas of paint that contain no distinct figures. Recognizable figures consist of two human figures pictured in frontal view and two boats with a curved shape.

Field research

1988, Survey, Leena Lehtinen & Juhani Grönhagen

1994, Survey, Timo Sepänmaa & Antti Bilund

LiteratureLehtinen, L. 1989: *Opas Etelä-Savon esihistoriaan*, 72

Kivikäs 1995: 124-125

Kivikäs 1999: 28-29

Kivikäs 2005: 91

76.**MUNICIPALITY:** MIKKELI**SITE:** VERIJÄRVI**Register number:** 492 01 0040**Year found:** 1990**Topographic map:** 3142 02 Vuolinko**Coordinates:** p: 6844 730, i: 3507 410, z: 105**Orientation:** SE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the eastern part of Lake Verijärvi, on a cliff rising on the western shore of a narrow bay (Haukilahti). The cliff is heavily fractured, of a dark colour, and rises directly from the lake. The painted area is located ca. 1.4-2.2 m above water.

The painted area (0.8 m high and 2.0 m wide) includes three human figures and an elk. Two of the human figures have been painted upside-down, as if diving into the lake below. Some traces of red are found also ca. 8 m to the south of the main panel, at a height of 2.5 m above water. In 1996, underwater investigations were arranged in front of the painting. There were no prehistoric finds, but several blocks of stone bearing red colour were lifted from the bottom of the lake. However, it is unclear if the colour is man-made paint or natural accumulation of red ochre.

Field research

1990, Inspection, Martti Koponen

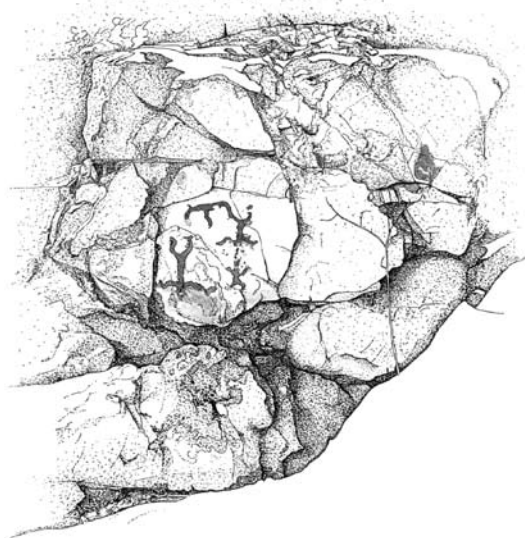
1993, Inspection, Panu Nykänen

1996, Underwater investigation, Juhani Grönhagen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 180-183

Kivikäs 1999: 58



A drawing by Pekka Kivikäs of the Verijärvi panel.

77.

MUNICIPALITY: MÄNTYHARJU
SITE: HALENNEENVUORI

Register number: 507000001

Year found: 2000

Topographic map: 3141 01 Herajärvi

Coordinates: p: 6809 080, i: 3507 240, z: 81

Orientation: ?

Class: 4

Description

The site is located in the southern part of the large lake of Kallavesi, on a boulder that has fallen off from the cliff of Halenneenvuori.

The boulder features some red marks (at least 13 vertical lines in an area 78 cm wide), the origin of which is uncertain. The red marks are very close to water (12 cm above the lake) and exposed to rain, making it rather unlikely for prehistoric paint to survive. The rock also features natural stripes that may explain the red marks.

Field research

2000, Inspection, Lauri Pohjakallio

Literature

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78.

MUNICIPALITY: MÄNTYHARJU
SITE: HAUKKAVUORI (I-III)

Register number: 507 01 0002

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 3123 07 Juolasvesi

Coordinates: p: 6802 840, i: 3488 060, z: 80

Orientation: SW, WSW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located in the NE end of Lake Sarkavesi, where a high cliff called Haukkavuori rises on the eastern shore of the lake. The cliff falls directly into the lake.

Paintings can be found on three different panels (I-III) extending over a ca. 200 m long a stretch of the cliff. On the right hand side, faint marks of red are visible above a small semicave. To the left of the cave, a boulder in front of the cliff has been painted, featuring at least three boat figures and remains of other motifs. Still further to the left, three figures are found on three separate painted areas: a well-preserved handprint, a human figure painted upside-down and a geometric figure resembling a net. Under the net, a small fully painted elk is found facing left.

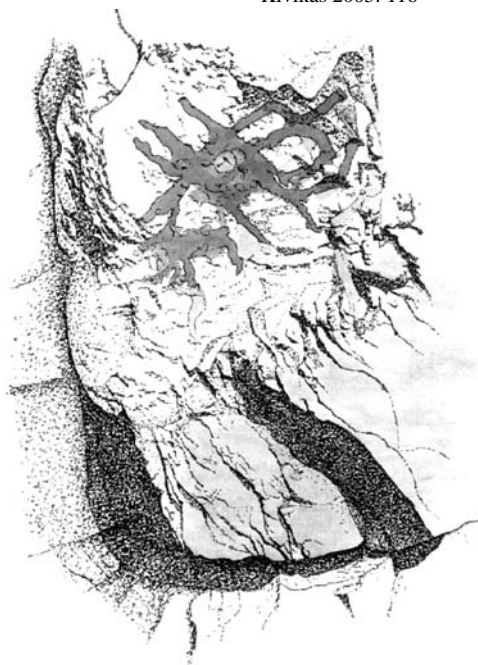
Field research

1975, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 195-198

Kivikäs 2005: 116



*A net-like figure at the painting of Haukkavuori in Mäntyharju.
 According to Pekka Kivikäs.*

79.

MUNICIPALITY: MÄNTYHARJU

SITE: ITKONLAHTI

Register number: 507 01 0003**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3141 01 Herajärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6809 660, i: 3506 500, z: 85**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the southern shore of Lake Kallavesi, at the mouth of a bay called Itkonlahti. The painting has been made on a low cliff that rises on the lakeshore, ca. one meter above water.

The painted area is ca. 3.7 m wide and 1.0 m high, but includes only a few, faintly visible figures: some fragmentary images of elk and one human figure.

Field research

1975, Inspection, Lauri Pohjakallio

Literature

Pohjakallio, L. 1977: Mäntyharjun Itkonlahden kalliomaalaus. *Kotiseutu* 1977/6, 183-186.

Kivikäs 1995: 193-194

Kivikäs 2005: 114

80.

MUNICIPALITY: MÄNTYHARJU

SITE: KANNONALUS

Register number: 507 01 0031**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3123 07 Juolasvesi**Coordinates:** p: 6803 540, i: 3487 600, z: 83**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of Lake Sarkavesi, at the mouth of a small bay called Kannonalus, where a large cliff rises on the lakeshore. The lowest part of the painting is located ca. 3.5 m above the surface of water.

The painting consists of two boat figures, both of them ca. 30 cm long. The upper boat has six crew-lines, the lower one at least three.

Field research

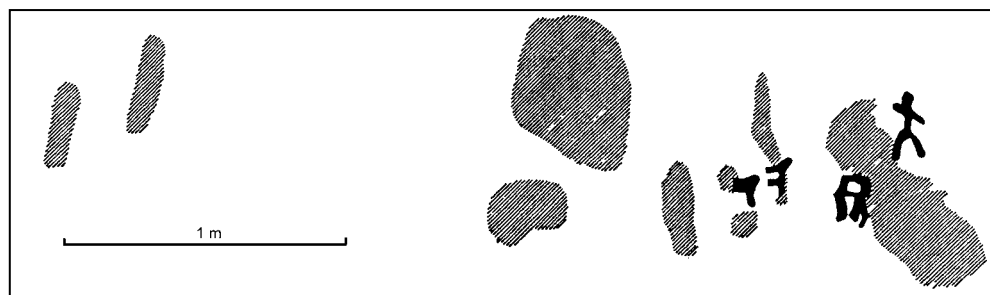
1997, Inspection, Eero Siljander & Leena Lehtinen

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 115



The painting of Linnakallio B ('Castle Cliff' B) lies on the left hand side of the photo. When it was made, the cliff would have risen straight from the lake.



A tracing by Lauri Pohjakallio of the Itkonlahti painting.

81.**MUNICIPALITY:** NASTOLA**SITE:** LINNAKALLIO B**Register number:** 1000 00 1371**Year found:** 2003**Topographic map:** 3111 09 Nastola**Coordinates:** p: 6765 710, i: 3444 310, z: 89**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of Lake Salajärvi, at the foot of an Iron Age hillfort (Kalkkolan Linnakallio). The painted area lies on the western part of the fortified hill, on a precipice that has originally fallen directly into water. A road leading to a villa has been built in front of the cliff in the 20th century, making it possible to reach the painting from dry land.

The painting is a small (56 cm x 32 cm) area of red ochre. A small elk figure can be recognized, although the poor preservation of the painting makes the identification uncertain.

Field research

2003, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Poutiainen & Lahelma 2004.

82.**MUNICIPALITY:** PAIMIO**SITE:** REKOTTILAN LINNAVUORI**Register number:** 577010002**Year found:** 1989**Topographic map:** 2021 06 Kevola**Coordinates:** p: 6709 420, i: 3266 003, z: ca. 47**Orientation:** SE**Class:** 2**Description**

The site was found in the fall of 1989 during the investigations of the Iron Age hillfort of Rekottila in Paimio, near Turku in south-western Finland. The painted cliff is located on a ca. 5 m high precipice near the top of the NW side of the rocky hill.

All three of the observed areas of red ochre are located ca. 1.5 m above the ground and thus appear to have been painted from dry land. The painting seems to be man-made rather than a natural stain of red ochre. If so, it is the westernmost rock painting found so far in Finland.

Field research

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Literature

Pukkila, J. 1990. Onko Paimiossa kalliomaalaus? *Muinaistutkija* 2/1990, 9-11.



A painted cliff on top of the Rekottila hillfort.

83.**MUNICIPALITY:** PARIKKALA (FORMERLY UUKUNIEMI)**SITE:** KUOREVAARA**Register number:** 891 01 0002**Year found:** 1993**Topographic map:** 4124 11 Niukkala**Coordinates:** p: 6850 995, i: 3653 647, z: 85**Orientation:** W**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located close to Finland's eastern border, on a huge erratic boulder located on the eastern side of Lake Ylä-Kuorejärvi ca. 100 m east of the lakeshore.

The painting consists of a several marks made with a strong red colour. The marks are clearly man-made and include some fragmentary figures, but none that can be identified with any certainty.

Field research

1995, Survey, Antti Bilund

2004, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 132-133

Kivikäs 1999: 70

Kivikäs 2005: 128

84.**MUNICIPALITY:** PARIKKALA (FORMERLY UUKUNIEMI)**SITE:** LOUHISAARI**Register number:** 891 01 0001**Year found:** 1989**Topographic map:** 4231 01 Närsäkkälä**Coordinates:** p: 6865 055, i: 3663 412, z: 81.5**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on a fractured cliff rising on the western shore small island (Louhisaari) on Lake Pyhäjärvi, only ca. 2 km west of the Finnish-Russian border.

The painting consists of an unusual, net-like figure (size 90 x 30 cm). Although the interpretation is uncertain, it seems that the 'net' is in fact formed by seven or eight schematic elk figures placed one on top of the other.

Field research

1989, Inspection, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

2004, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

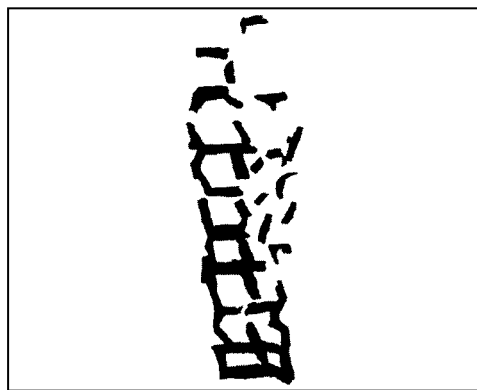
Kivikäs 1995: 129-133

Kivikäs 1999: 69

Kivikäs 2005: 126



*The painted boulder of Kuorevaara.
Photo: Miiikka Pyykkönen.*



*The painting of Louhisaari (tracing by J.-P.
Taavitsainen).*

85.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUNKAHARJU**SITE:** MURRONVUORI**Register number:** 618 00 0001**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 4122 08 Pietolansaari**Coordinates:** p: 6843 634, i: 3604 565, z: 85**Orientation:** NNE**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located in the northern part of the island of Saukonsaari, on a peninsula called Enoniemi, where a steep cliff (Murronvuori) rises on the NE shore of the island. The painting has evidently been made from a rock terrace in front of the cliff.

The painting consists of three areas of red paint, none of which bears any identifiable figures.

Field research

1997, Inspection, Martti Koponen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 65-66

86.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUUMALA**SITE:** KAITAJÄRVI (VÖLJÄRINSALMI)**Register number:** 623 01 0087**Year found:** 1992**Topographic map:** 3144 07 Keriniemi**Coordinates:** p: 6833 840, i: 3560 660, z: 79.8-85.5**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 2/3**Description**

The painting is located on the eastern shore of a long and narrow, north-south oriented lake (Kaitajärvi), where a strait called Völjärinsalmi is found approximately in the middle of the lake. The painted cliff can be seen from the lake, but does not fall directly into water.

The painting consists of some remains of red ochre – two vertical lines – that are probably remains of a prehistoric a rock painting. More traces of red can be seen under the lichen, suggesting that the painted area may be larger than can be seen at present.

Field research

1992, Inspection, M. Koponen & H.Poutiainen

Literature

Koponen et al. 1993.

Kivikäs 1995: 143



The painting of Murronvuori is located behind the birch. Photo: Eero Siljander.

87.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUUMALA**SITE:** KULTEISVUORI**Register number:** -**Year found:** ?**Topographic map:** 3144 04 Kaipaala**Coordinates:** p: 6836 090, i: 3559 740, z: ?**Orientation:** ?**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the western shore Lake Lohijärvi, close to a narrow strait leading south towards Lake Kaitajärvi.

This cliff is sometimes mentioned as a rock painting, but according to Eero Siljander (pers. comm), the marks of red on the cliff of Kulteisvuori are most probably natural.

Field research

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Literature

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88.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUUMALA**SITE:** KUUTINVUORI**Register number:** 1000003320**Year found:** 2005**Topographic map:** 3143 06 Rokansalo**Coordinates:** p: 6828 780, i: 3559 560, z: 82.37-83.08**Orientation:** ESE**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The site is located in the northern part of Lake Lietvesi (part of the Saimaa lake system), on the western shore of a small bay called Miettulahti. The cliff falls directly into water and the painting can only be seen from a boat or the winter ice. The figure is located ca. 6.5-7 m above the present surface of the lake.

The painting, which covers an area of ca. 50 x 70 cm, is badly worn and the figures are difficult to identify. Some reports mention two fragmentary stick figure humans, possibly also an elk. The cliff bears also some late (20th century) carvings and graffiti.

Field research

2005, Inspection, Martti Koponen

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 96



An unusual rock formation, painted bright red, and a stick-figure animal facing right at Maksasaarenselkä.

89.

MUNICIPALITY: PUUMALA
SITE: MAKSASAARENSELKÄ

Register number: 623 01 0006

Year found: 1981

Topographic map: 3143 12 Ummistonvesi

Coordinates: p: 6825 130, i: 3579 640, z: 85

Orientation: SSW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on the large island of Viljakansaari on Lake Saimaa, on the southern shore of a peninsula called Riihoniemi. The cliff is on the lakeshore, but is today hidden by a strip of forest growing in front of it.

A rather large (9 m wide) painting that has intensive areas of red colour, but not many identifiable figures. Two (possibly three) stick-figure elk facing left can be made out. The most notable feature is an unusual smooth protrusion of the rock that has been painted bright red.

Field research

1982, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas

1982, Inspection, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

1982, Inspection, Ari Siiriäinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 138-140

Kivikäs 1999: 75-76

Kivikäs 2005: 100

90.

MUNICIPALITY: PUUMALA
SITE: SOURUNNIEMI

Register number: 1000002775

Year found: 2004

Topographic map: 3143 09 Puumala

Coordinates: p: 6829 261, i: 3567 572, z: 81.3

Orientation: SW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on Lake Saimaa in the area of Haapaselkä, where a peninsula called Sourunniemi reaches towards the north. The cliff is an imposing, 200 m long precipice, which rises close to shoreline (but not straight from the lake).

The painting consists of a single, rather unusual image formed by a triangle, a vertical line and a few more triangular shapes. It can probably be interpreted as the upper part of a human figure with a triangular head, similar to certain human figures at Keltavuori and Uittamonsalmi.

Field research

2004, Inspection, Martti Koponen

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 98



Sourunniemi.

91.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUUMALA**SITE:** SYRJÄSALMI**Register number:** 623 01 0005**Year found:** 1977**Topographic map:** 3143 12 Ummistonvesi**Coordinates:** p: 6825 680, i: 3570 040, z: 80**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on Lake Saimaa, in a narrow strait (Syrjäsalmi) in the western part of the large island of Viljakansaari. The cliff is an imposing wall of rock, lightly coloured and smooth, but partly hidden by trees growing on the shore. It can be reached from dry land today, but would originally have risen straight from the lake.

The paintings of Syrjäsalmi form two groups: one on the left hand side of the cliff, with two human figures – large and small – that are today located ca. 5.5 m above water and a second, larger (size ca. 4 x 4 m) group on the right hand side. The latter features at least two human figures, an unusually bright area of red paint and possibly fragments of other images as well. A part of the second group is located much lower down than the first group, indicating that the site has a long history of use. Some fragments of quartz (NM 25736:1-2) were collected in a 1990 survey from shallow water in front of the painting. However, they might in fact be natural quartz fragments rather than artefacts.

Field research

1978, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas, Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, Kari A. Kinnunen

1990, Survey, Timo Jussila & Panu Nykänen

1994, Inspection, Timo Jussila

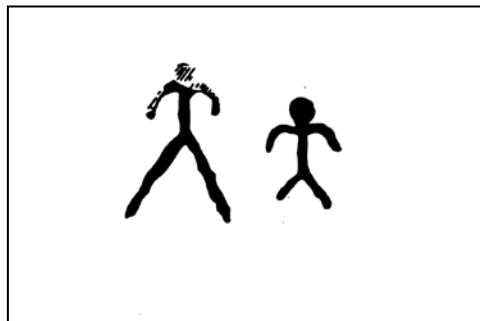
Literature

Taavitsainen, J.-P. & Kinnunen, K.A. 1979: Puumalan Syrjäsalmen kalliomaalauksista ja kalliomaalauksen säilymisestä. *Geologi* 1979/3, 37-42.

Kivikäs 1995: 134-137

Kivikäs 1999: 73-74

Kivikäs 2005: 96



Two human figures - large and small - at Syrjäsalmi. Tracing by J.-P. Taavitsainen.

92.**MUNICIPALITY:** PUUMALA**SITE:** VETOTAIPALE**Register number:** 623 01 0088**Year found:** 1992**Topographic map:** 4121 03 Katosselkä**Coordinates:** p: 6826 789, i: 3586 917, z: 80**Orientation:** S**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on Lake Saimaa, on the southern shore of a peninsula called Reposenniemi, where a low and rather unimpressive yellowish rock cliff faces south.

The paintings of Vetotaipale are most very faint and partly destroyed due to the flaking of the cliff face. An oblique cross has been painted high up on the cliff. Below this, a blurred area of paint includes at least one elk (height 25 cm), a small animal (10 x 15 cm) and some remains of other figures. On the right edge of the cliff, a boat figure, human and a handprint are discernible.

Field research

1992, Inspection, Martti Koponen & Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Koponen et al. 1993: xxx

Kivikäs 1995: 141-142

Kivikäs 1999: 77



The badly worn rock painting of Vetotaipale.



An area of bright red paint at Syrjäsalmi (upper, central part of the image).

93.

MUNICIPALITY: PUUMALA

SITE: VUORILAMPI

Register number: 1000008967

Year found: 2007

Topographic map: 4121 06 Lieviskä

Coordinates: p: 6821 481, i: 3589 950, z: 115

Orientation: E

Class: 1

Description

The location of this site is very unusual: the painting has been made inside an impressive cave-like shelter formed by a huge boulder resting against a cliff, high above and rather far away (230 m) from the nearest body of water, a small lake called Vuorilampi. Unlike most other sites that are today accessible from dry land, this painting has never been immediately at water's edge. Lake Saimaa is located ca. 1 km to the NW.

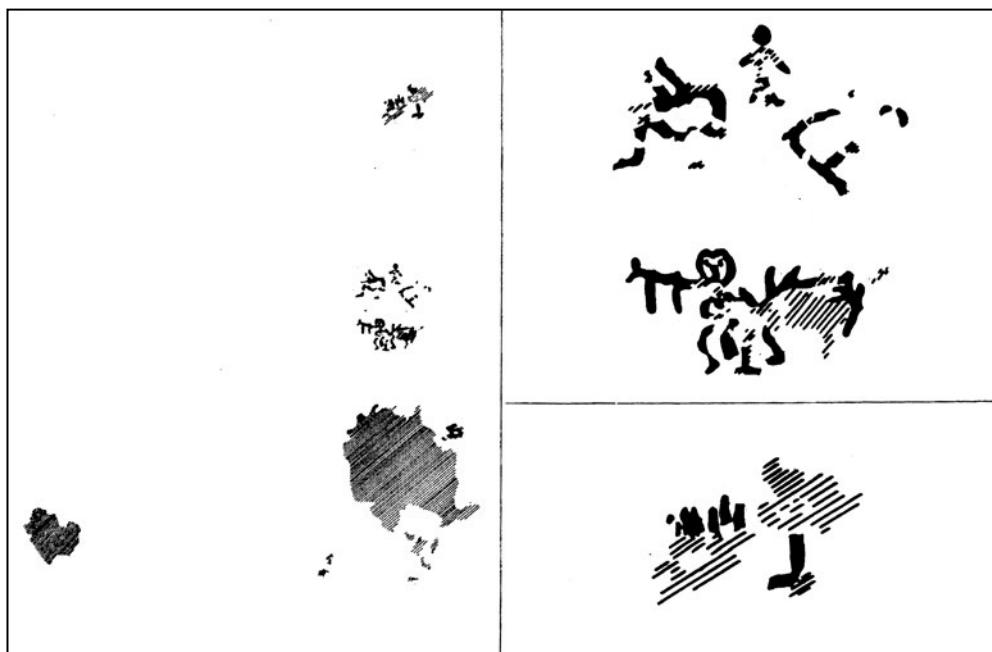
The painting consists of a single, very faint human figure (height 32 cm, width 14 cm), barely visible to the naked eye. Electronically retouched photos suggest that the human figure may be female, that is, it has two breast-like lines under the arms. According to some reports, the figure seems to hold something – a spear or a bow – in its left hand.

Field research

2007, Inspection, Martti Koponen

Literature

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The main panel of Syrjäsalmi (on the left) and two details (on the right). Tracing by J.-P.Taavitsainen.

94.**MUNICIPALITY:** RAUTALAMPI**SITE:** TOUSSUNLINNA**Register number:** 1000002774**Year found:** 2004**Topographic map:** 3223 08 Myhinpää**Coordinates:** p: 6937 980, i: 3489 280, z: 97.5**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the southern part of Lake Hankavesi, on the western bank of a long and narrow N-S oriented bay. The painted cliff rises straight from the lake and differs from other cliffs in the region by having smooth and lightly coloured precipices. A small cave-like opening is located in the cliff near the paintings.

The painting is blurred and partly covered by lichen. The only distinguishable motif is a human figure ca. 43 cm high and 21 cm wide. More figures may lie hidden by the lichen.

Field research

2004, Survey, Timo Sepänmaa

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 76

95.**MUNICIPALITY:** RAUTJÄRVI**SITE:** RIUTTAVUORI**Register number:** 689 01 0008**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 4121 10 Untamo**Coordinates:** p: 6809 490, i: 3615 148, z: 96**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The site is located on the island of Suurisaari located in the middle of Lake Nurmijärvi. The painted cliff is in the SW corner of the island and falls directly into the lake.

The painting is found on a fractured face of the cliff and consists of three red marks. The figures are badly preserved, but it appears that the painting includes human figures, possibly as many as five of them. The poor state of preservation makes it difficult to discern any details, however.

Field research

1997, Survey, Minna Kähtävä-Marttinen

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 129



The setting of Vuorilampi painting is unusual: in a cave formed by the cliff and boulder on the right, far above the nearest body of water.

96.**MUNICIPALITY:** RAUTJÄRVI**SITE:** TORSANVUORI**Register number:** 689 01 0009**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 4121 11 Torsansalo**Coordinates:** p: 6815 110, i: 3619 776, z: 80**Orientation:** 2**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located on the northern shore of Lake Pieni-Torsa, on the tip of a small peninsula, where a rocky hill called Torsanvuori rises near the shore. The cliff is hidden by a narrow strip of forest growing on the shore. The cliff also features an 18th century carving, indicating the state border between Sweden and Russia.

The cliff face is badly eroded. Remains of bright red colour are visible on an area ca. 2 m wide and 1.7 m high, but only in places where an older, smooth surface is preserved, suggesting that the colour is derived from a mostly destroyed prehistoric rock painting.

Field research

1997, Survey, Minna Kähtävä-Marttinen

Literature

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97.**MUNICIPALITY:** RISTINA**SITE:** ASTUVANSALMI**Register number:** 696 01 0003**Year found:** 1968**Topographic map:** 3141 08 Himalansaari**Coordinates:** p: 6815 240, i: 3529 200, z: 80**Orientation:** SSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on Lake Yövesi, in the western part of the Saimaa lake system. The painted cliff is a steep, lightly coloured and rather concave precipice rising on the lakeshore, in a narrow strait left between the mainland and the island of Astuva. When it was painted, the cliff rose straight from the lake, but today it can be accessed from a narrow strip of dry land. Astuvansalmi is one of the best examples of an 'anthropomorphic' cliff in Finland: seen from the lake, its right-hand side is distinctly reminiscent of a human face.

The painted area is ca. 16.5 m wide and 5.5 m high. It is one of the largest and certainly the most famous rock painting in Finland, featuring at least 60 but possibly as many as 80 different images. The great vertical extent of the paintings indicates a very long history of use. The figures, which are mostly quite well preserved, were divided into the following 15 groups by Pekka Sarvas, who found the painting in 1968:

- a) a group of six vertical lines;
- b) a large elk painted in outline (heart marked with a spot), a boat and a human, as well as fragmentary remains of three or four elk;
- c) two handprints
- d) a horned anthropomorph and two human figures (as well as some fragments of more human figures), a boat and at least four elk painted in outline, two of them with hearts marked with a spot;



The painted cliff of Astuvansalmi on the shore of Lake Yövesi.

- e) two hand- or paw-prints, a human figure, a fish and three partly preserved elk, at least one of which has the heart marked;
- f) a female figure holding a bow ('Artemis'), at least three elk painted in outline and with the heart marked, as well as some fragmentary elk figures, two horned anthropomorphs and two human figures, and several handprints (at least three);
- g) two elk, one facing left (like most elk at Astuvansalmi), with the heart marked and four strokes (horns?) on the head, and one facing right, as well as a fragmentary stick figure human;
- h) a boat-like figure and some unidentified marks;
- i) an elk painted in outline, with a particularly 'box-shaped' body;
- j) a large, fragmentary elk painted in outline, a small stick-figure elk, and two boat figures (one of them claimed – probably mistakenly – to bear a ring-cross);
- k) a female human figure, a fragmentary human figure, two elk painted in outline, and two handprints;
- l) the torso of a very large elk figure, a small stick-figure elk and two boats, one of which (probably mistakenly) was claimed to feature a 'sun-cross';
- m) an elk-headed (?) boat figure and some unidentified signs;
- n) an elk painted in outline, with a heart, box-shaped body and no legs, as well as a boat figure that is joined by two lines to the head of the elk;
- o) two boat figures and two fragmentary human figures.

Two prehistoric arrow points (NM 17363:1-2) were found in 1968 in excavations held at the foot of the painting, and four amber pendants (NM 25771, 26331:1-2, 27146) were found in underwater excavations arranged in front of the cliff.

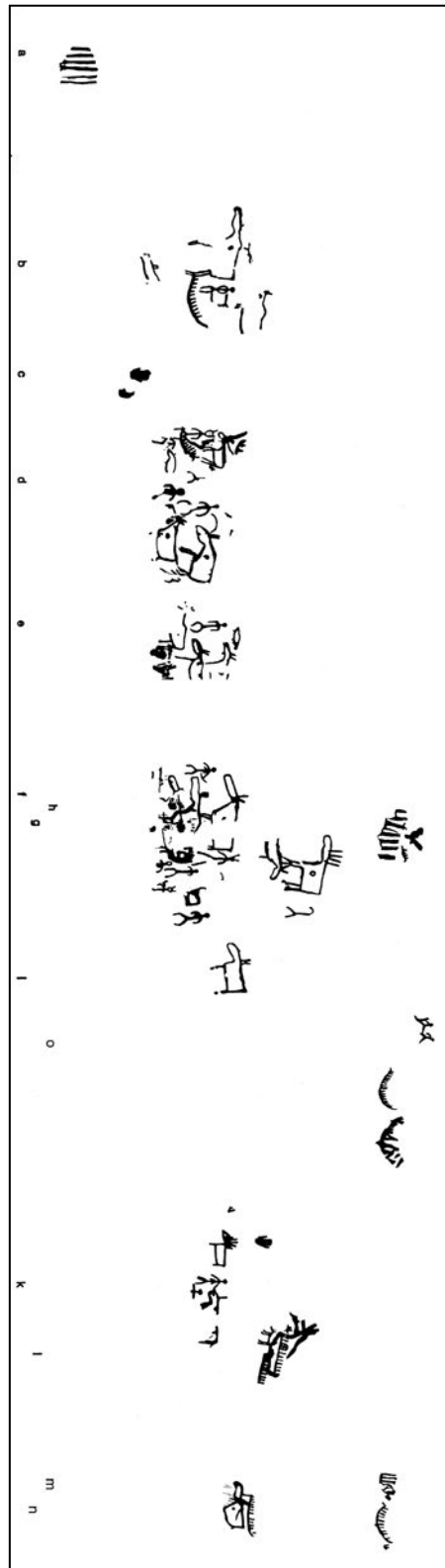
Field research

- 1968, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas
 1969, Tracing and Excavation, Pekka Sarvas
 1975, Inspection, P. Sarvas and J.-P. Taavitsainen
 1988, Underwater excavation, Juhani Grönhagen
 1990, Underwater excavation, Juhani Grönhagen
 1991, Underwater excavation, Juhani Grönhagen
 1992, Underwater excavation, Juhani Grönhagen
 1992, Excavation, Leena Lehtinen

Literature

- Sarvas, P. 1969: Die Felsmalerei von Astuvansalmi. *Suomen Museo* 76, 5-33.
 Saarnisto, M. 1969: Geologie der Fundstätte Astuvansalmi. *Suomen Museo* 76, 34-39.
 Sarvas, P. 1973. Astuvansalmen kalliomaalaus. In Haltsonen, Lakio, Pinomaa & Särkkä (eds.), *Ristiinan entisyyttä ja nykypäivää*, 9-30. Helsinki.
 Grönhagen, J. 1991: An Amber Pendant from Astuvansalmi in Ristiina, Finland. *Fennoscandia Archaeologica* VIII, 73-76.
 Grönhagen, J. 1994: Ristiinan Astuvansalmi, muinainen kulttipaikkako? *Suomen Museo* 101, 5-18.
 Kivikäs 1995: 51-77
 Kivikäs 1999: 32-47
 Kivikäs 2005: 102-107

A tracing of the Astuvansalmi paintings by Pekka Sarvas. Group o, missing from the original published tracing, has been added.





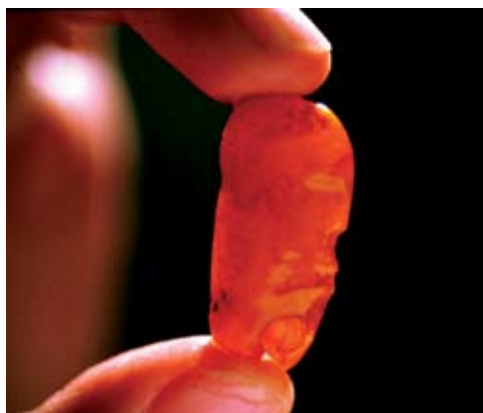
The central part of the Astuvansalmi painting (groups f, g and h).



Two handprints and an elk at Astuvansalmi (group i).



Group d at Astuvansalmi.



Two of the four amber pendants found underwater in front of the Astuvansalmi paintings. Photographs courtesy of Juhani Grönhagen.

98.

MUNICIPALITY: RISTINA

SITE: UITTAMONSALMI (I-IV)

Register number: 696 01 0006

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 3141 08 Himalansaari

Coordinates: p: 6816 580, i: 3520 200, z: 80

Orientation: SW, SSE, SSW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on the northern shore of Lake Yövesi, in a strait called Uittamonsalmi. All the paintings are today situated high above the surface of the lake and preceded by boulder fields that make it difficult to access them from dry land.

The paintings are located on four different panels that extend over ca. 250 m long stretch of the cliff. The easternmost painting (I) is the easiest one to access, being located above a steep gravel terrace. It consists of a group of three human figures, four (?) boats and two elk figures. One of the elk is a well-preserved animal painted outline but with legs missing (probably intentionally). Approximately 155 m to SE, panel II is the largest group of paintings at the site. It consists of three elk – one stick-figure and two animals painted in outline – three or four human figures (one of them is horned), two small boats and some unidentifiable figures. The third group is located 86 m further to SE and consists of two figures, a boat and a small human figure with a large circular or triangular head. The last group, panel IV, is found ten meters away from the third and features a single human figure with a circular head and a spot of paint resembling a halo above the head.

Field research

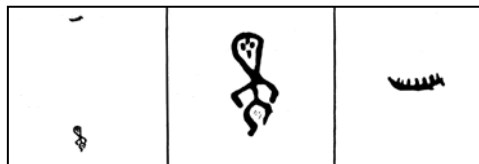
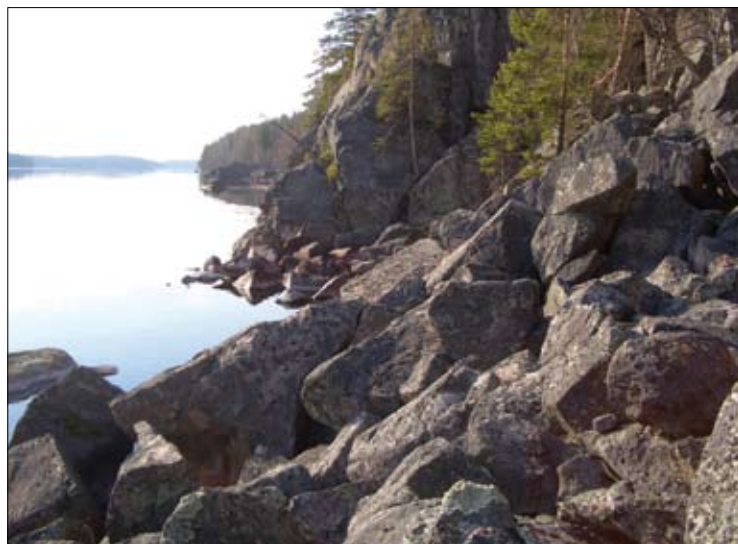
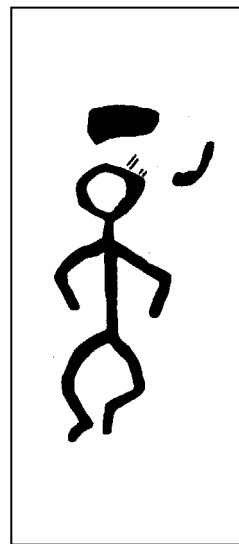
1975, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas

LiteratureSarvas, P. & Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1976. Kalliomaalauksia Lemiltä ja Ristiinasta. *Suomen Museo* 83, 30-52.

Kivikäs 1995: 78-83

Kivikäs 1999: 48-53

Kivikäs 2005: 108-111

*Uittamonsalmi III.**A tracing of Uittamonsalmi I according to Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976.**A view of Lake Yövesi from the foot of the Uittamonsalmi cliff.**Uittamonsalmi IV (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976).*

99.

MUNICIPALITY: RUOKOLAHTI

SITE: KOLMIKÖYTISIENVUORI

Register number: 700 01 0016

Year found: 1975

Topographic map: 4112 03 Mietinsaari

Coordinates: p: 6796 864, i: 3587 457, z: 79.2

Orientation: WSW

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on the western shore of the island of Äitsaari, where a smallish, heavily fractured cliff called Kolmiköytisienvuori rises in the bottom of a small bay.

The painting is bright red and visible from afar, but its central part – in which two large human figures can be discerned – is blurred and weathered. Above the two humans, it is possible to discern two smaller human figures, a snake, some wavy lines and – perhaps – an elk. One of the smaller human figures appears to have a lower body formed by a wavy line. To the right of these figures, some faint figures (including possibly one more human figure) painted in more yellowish hue can be seen. For a tracing, see figure 27 on page 55.

Field research

1977, Survey, Timo Miettinen

1996, Survey, Minna Kähtävä-Marttinen

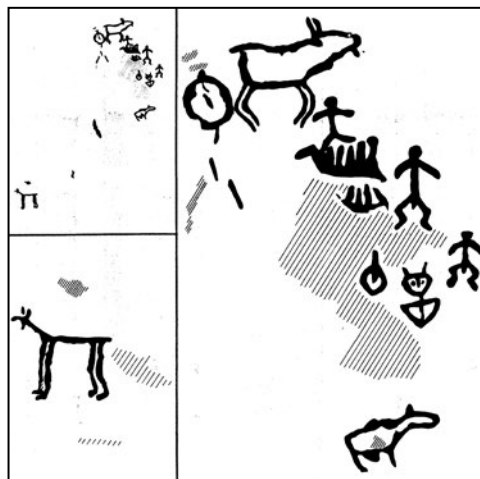
Literature

Miettinen, T. 1977: Ruokolahden kalliomaalaus: merkittävä kulttuurilöytö. *Karjalainen viesti* 3/1977, 11-18.

Kivikäs 1995: 144-147

Kivikäs 1999: 80-82

Kivikäs 2005: 130-131



Uittamonsalmi II. (Sarvas & Taavitsainen 1976).

100.

MUNICIPALITY: RUOKOLAHTI

SITE: LAPINVUORI

Register number: 700 01 0020

Year found: 1994

Topographic map: 3143 12 Ummistonvesi

Coordinates: p: 6822 140, i: 3578 230, z: 84.02

Orientation: W

Class: 2

Description

The painting is located on the western shore of the large island of Pytäränsaari on Lake Saimaa, on the eastern shore of a long and narrow, north-south-oriented strait (Virtasensalmi).

The painting consists of a bright red area of paint, 72 cm high and 20 cm wide. No figures can be discerned in the painted area. However, more paintings might be hidden under the lichen to the right.

Field research

1994, Inspection, Jukka Luoto

1996, Survey, Minna Kähtävä-Marttinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 148

Kivikäs 1999: 78

Kivikäs 2005: 130-131



A view of the cliff of Lapinvuori.



The painting of Lapinvuori.

101.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVITAIPALE**SITE:** JÄKÄLÄNJÄRVI**Register number:** 739 00 0022**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3132 10 Jääsjärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6772 740, i: 3532 640, z: 78.40-80.80**Orientation:** W**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the tip of a peninsula (Ruuniemi), which extends into the small lake of Jäkälänjärvi. The cliff is an imposing precipice partly covered by a strip of forest growing on the shore.

The painting consists of a single human figure and a vertical, slightly twisting line.

Field research

1997, Inspection, Jukka Luoto

1998, Inspection, Pekka Kivikäs

2004, Survey, University of Helsinki field school

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 142

102.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVITAIPALE**SITE:** LUOTOLAHDENVUORI**Register number:** 739 01 0023**Year found:** 1998**Topographic map:** 3132 12 Kuolimo**Coordinates:** p: 6798 550, i: 3533 280, z: 90**Orientation:** W**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of a long and narrow SE-NW –oriented strait (Luotolahdensalmi).

According to Pekka Kivikäs, the painting is very faint and unclear, but possibly features a human figure. Several surveyors have searched for the painting but been unable to locate it, so its authenticity remains somewhat in question.

Field research

2004, Survey, Petteri Pietiläinen

Literature

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A view of Lake Jäkälänjärvi from the rock painting.

103.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVONLINNA**SITE:** HEPOKALLIO**Register number:** -**Year found:** 1993**Topographic map:** 4122 11 Moinsalmi**Coordinates:** p: 6847 125, i: 3613 257, z: 83.95**Orientation:** N**Class:** 3**Description**

The site is located on Lake Pihlajavesi, on the southern shore of a narrow, east-west-oriented strait. The possible painted spot lies ca. 6-7 m above the present surface of the lake.

The cliff of Hepokallio features a small area of red colour of uncertain origin. Its location in the landscape and height above water would support the idea that it is man-made, but opinions have been mixed.

Field research

-

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 114

Kivikäs 1999: 64

104.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVONLINNA**SITE:** IKOINNIEMI (HAUKKAVUORI)**Register number:** 1000003280**Year found:** 1992**Topographic map:** 4122 09 Ikoinniemi**Coordinates:** p: 6853 100, i: 4446 560, z: 80.8-82.5**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The peninsula of Ikoinniemi is located ca. 7 km to SE of the church of Savonlinna, on the eastern side of a steep cliff called Haukkavuori. The cliff is today located on the shore of a small lake, which would have been narrow strait in the Ancient Lake Saimaa when the painting was made. The painted cliff lies at a distance of 19 m from the lakeshore.

The paintings, located ca. 3.8 m above ground, are poorly preserved. Two figures - apparently humans - can be made out from the painted area, which altogether has a size of ca. 1.7 x 0.6.

Field research

1992, Inspection, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Koponen et al. 1993.

Kivikäs 1995: 115

Kivikäs 1999: 64



The painting of Ikoinniemi (Haukkavuori) in Savonlinna. According to Koponen et al. 1993.

105.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVONLINNA**SITE:** KARSIKKOVUORI A**Register number:** 1000003280**Year found:** 1999?**Topographic map:** 4122 09 Ikoinniemi**Coordinates:** p: 6854 340, i: 3604 220, z: 81**Orientation:** ?**Class:** 4**Description**

The site is located on the south-western part of a peninsula called Ikoinniemi, ca. 100 m to the north of the rocky hill of Karsikkovuori, on a small cliff by a lakeshore.

The painting consists of faint remains of red that may well be natural, even if the location and shape of the cliff are typical of rock paintings. The 'painting' is located ca. three meters above ground.

Field research

1999, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

-

106.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVONLINNA**SITE:** ORIVUORI**Register number:** 1000003279**Year found:** 1987**Topographic map:** 4122 12 Kulennoinen**Coordinates:** p: 6854 135, i: 3609 430, z: 80**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 2**Description**

The imposing cliff of Orivuori is located on the Moin-selkä section of Lake Pihlajavesi. The cliff is today located on marshland, but when the painting was made it would have been standing on the shore of a small bay. A small pond called Orilampi – remains of the ancient bay – is located nearby.

The painting consists of a group of red marks ca. four meters above ground, covering an area ca. one meter wide and 40 cm high. There are no distinct figures to be seen, only some vertical lines, possibly the remains of weathered boat figures.

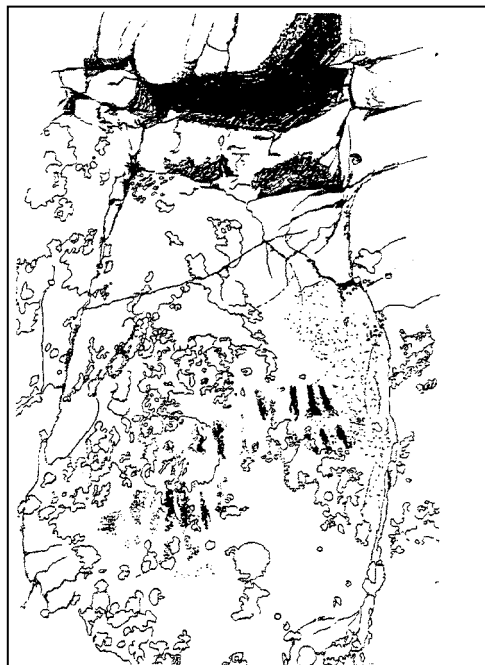
Field research

1987, Survey, Antti Bilund

2004, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 63



The painting of Orivuori. Drawn by P. Kivikäs.



The painting of Rapakko, showing two long-necked water birds.

107.**MUNICIPALITY:** SAVONLINNA**SITE:** RAPAKKO**Register number:** 740010140**Year found:** 1993**Topographic map:** 4122 03 Kommerniemi**Coordinates:** p: 6860 265, i: 3586 618, z: 84-85**Orientation:** E**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the tip of a small, rocky peninsula on the eastern shore of the island of Rapakko. The island is on Lake Pihlajavesi, part of the large lake of Saimaa. The painted spot is on the eastern face of a large erratic boulder, ca. 30 m from the shoreline.

The painting consists of two schematic, long-necked waterfowl – the only clear representations of birds in Finnish rock art. The lower figure is 23 cm high and 19 cm wide, whereas the upper figure is 15 cm high and of the same width. Some remains of painting can be seen above the birds. The species cannot be identified with certainty, but the long neck suggests that they might be swans.

Field research

1993, Survey, Poutiainen, Kupiainen & Koponen

1993, Inspection, Leena Lehtinen

1999, Inspection, Helena Taskinen

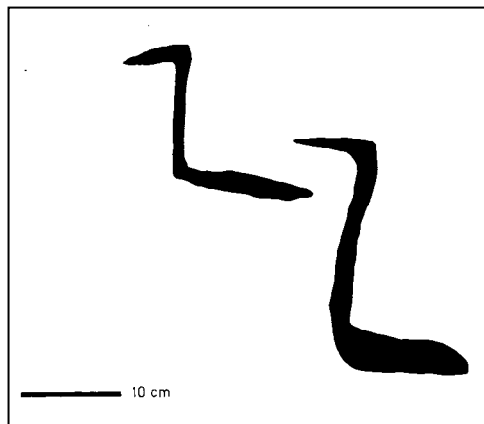
Literature

Koponen et al. 1993

Kivikäs 1995: 116-118

Kivikäs 1999: 62

Kivikäs 2005: 64



The painting of Rapakko according to Koponen, Kupiainen & Poutiainen 1993.

108.**MUNICIPALITY:** SOTKAMO**SITE:** HALOLANKALLIO**Register number:** 1000007944**Year found:** 2007**Topographic map:** 3433 08 Sotkamo**Coordinates:** p: 7118 610, i: 3560 614, z: 139**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern end of Lake Nuasjärvi, where the river of Mujehoulunjoki begins its course towards Lake Iso-Sapsojärvi. The cliff is a highly fractured precipice rising on the northern shore of the river mouth.

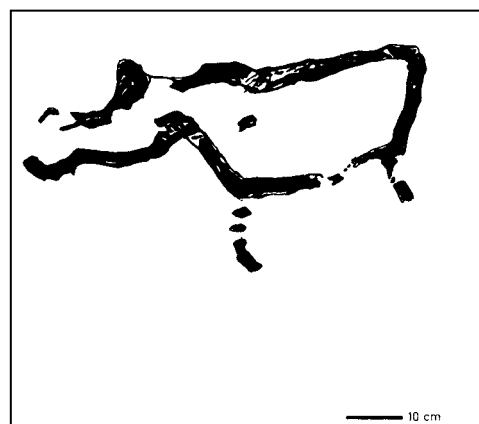
The painting consists of a single figure, probably a human (height 13 cm, width 15 cm) with an outstretched right hand. The painting has been made ca. one meter above water.

Field research

2007, Inspection, Esa Suominen & Helena Taskinen

Literature

-



An elk from Viidanmäki (overleaf). Tracing according to Koponen, Kupiainen & Poutiainen 1993.

109.**MUNICIPALITY:** SULKAVA**SITE:** KIVIKIRKKO**Register number:** 1000003710**Year found:** 1990**Topographic map:** 3144 08 Ryhälä**Coordinates:** p: 6842 720, i: 3567 380, z: 88**Orientation:** E**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located on the rocky peninsula of Kivin-iemi, located on a long and narrow strait between lakes Enovesi and Haapaselkä (part of Lake Saimaa). The painting is on eastern side of a huge (17 x 5-6 m, ca 10 m high) erratic boulder. The present lakeshore is located ca. 170 m to WNW.

Remains of painting can be seen in an area ca. one square meter in size, located approximately one meter above ground. The central part of the painting has flaked off and there are no identifiable features in the surviving parts of the painting. The name of the boulder (Kivikirkko) means 'Stone Church'.

Field research

1990, Survey, Hannu Poutiainen & Timo Sepänmaa
2006, Survey, University of Helsinki field school

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 120

Kivikäs 1999: 59

110.**MUNICIPALITY:** SULKAVA**SITE:** VIIDANMÄKI**Register number:** 1000003707**Year found:** 1992**Topographic map:** 3144 11 Kaartilankoski**Coordinates:** 6846 720, i: 3575 620, z: 83.5-86.7**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the island of Partalansaari, on the eastern shore of a bay called Sammallahti, which is part of the Saimaa lake system. The painted area is a steep precipice rising on the shore.

The painting consists of an elk figure painted in outline (height 32 cm), the heart of which has been marked with a spot, and a human stick figure (height 35 cm, width 19 cm). In addition to this, there are several indistinct remains of paintings. All paintings are located between ca. 6 and 9 m above ground.

Field research

1992, Inspection, Hannu Poutiainen

Literature

Koponen et al. 1993.

Kivikäs 1995: 119

Kivikäs 1999: 61



The cliff of Väräkallio.

111.**MUNICIPALITY:** SUOMENNIEMI**SITE:** LOUHTOVUORI**Register number:** 775 01 0002**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3141 04 Karkaus**Coordinates:** p: 6808240, i: 3516 220, z: 83.5**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in north-western part of Lake Kuolimo, in a narrow, NW-SE –oriented strait called Kurkiselkä, where a steep precipice (Louhtovuori) rises straight from the lake.

The paintings are located ca. 7 meters above the surface of the lake. The painting consists of at least five cervid figures.

Field research

1980, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 189-191

Kivikäs 1999: 54-55

Kivikäs 2005: 112

112.**MUNICIPALITY:** SUOMUSSALMI**SITE:** VÄRIKALLIO**Register number:** 777 01 0100**Year found:** 1977**Topographic map:** 4514 02 Syrjä-Somer**Coordinates:** p: 7270 732, i: 3606 709, z: 239**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in uninhabited wilderness, in the eastern end of Lake Somerjärvi, on a smallish steep cliff rising on the northern shore of the lake.

In terms of its number of figures, Värrikallio is one of the largest rock painting sites in Finland. The rock face is painted with tens of images – at least sixty – many of which are fragmentary and can only barely be distinguished in the midst of the shapeless stains of red ochre that colour much of the cliff (hence the name Värrikallio or ‘Colour Rock’). The figures cover an area of 10.5 m and have been painted between 20 cm and 2.5 m above the surface of the lake. They have been divided into 12 groups by Taavitsainen:

- a) a group of three or four stick figure humans and remains of other figures
- b) four stick figure elk or deer (one of which is jumping upwards), some geometric figures and a fallen human being
- c) a group of upwards-rising figures, consisting of at least seven elk, two humans, a triangular shape (human face?) and a bear (?)
- d) fragmentary images, including at least one human being
- e) a horned human head and two non-cervid animals (beavers or lizards?)
- f) the main group, including two large triangle-headed human figures, a fully painted horned anthropomorph, a large fully painted elk and several stick figure elk
- g) a horned human face and some fragmentary figures
- h) a triangle-headed human figure and fragmentary images
- i) stick figure elk and fragmentary images
- j) a circle-headed human figure, a zigzag-line and remains of other figures
- k) stick figure elk, a human figure and figure with a rake-like lower part
- l) geometric figure resembling a rake

Field research

1977, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas

1984, Inspection, Aimo Kehusmaa

Literature

Taavitsainen, J.-P. 1979: Suomussalmen Värrikallio: kal-liomaalaus Nämforsenin ja Itä-Karjalan kalliopiirrosten välissä. *Kotiseutu* 3-4/1979, 109-117.

Kivikäs 1995: 87-101

Kivikäs 2005: 78

A retouched panorama image of the Värkällo painting. The saturation of red hues has been adjusted.



A tracing of the Värkällo painting by J.P.Tamvisainen.



113.

MUNICIPALITY: TAIPALSAARI
SITE: KANNUKSEN LINNAVUORI

Register number: 831 01 0037

Year found: 1997

Topographic map: 3134 02 Vitsai

Coordinates: p: 6785 040, i: 3548 260, z: ca. 78?

Orientation: W

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on Lake Pien-Saimaa, on the south-western face of a smallish rock cliff which can only be accessed from water. There is an ancient hillfort on top of the cliff.

The painting is badly weathered and faint and the images are difficult to see with the naked eye. Digitally retouched images suggest that there are several large human figures with raised hands, possibly also animal figures, forming a scene that resembles the painting of Kolmiköytisienvuori.

Field research

1997, Survey, Kaarlo Katiskoski & Teemu Mökkönen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 83

Kivikäs 2005: 132

114.

MUNICIPALITY: TAIPALSAARI
SITE: LAMPOSAARI

Register number: 831 00 0003

Year found: 1993

Topographic map: 3134 09 Suuri Jänkäsalo

Coordinates: p: 6798 440, i: 3568 150, z: ?

Orientation: ?

Class: 4

Description

The site is located on the western tip of a small island in the middle of the large Lake Saimaa.

A lakeshore cliff features remains of orange colour of uncertain provenance. They may be natural accumulations of ochre.

Field research

-

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 313

Kivikäs 1999: 79



The site of Kannuksen linnavuori seen from Lake Saimaa.

115.**MUNICIPALITY:** TAIPALSAARI**SITE:** LINTUINVUORI**Register number:** 831 01 0038**Year found:** 1997**Topographic map:** 3134 02 Vitsai**Coordinates:** p: 6785 390, i: 3546 360, z: 79.9**Orientation:** W**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located in the western part of Lake Pien-Saimaa, on the western face of a high precipice rising directly from the lake. The cliff is smooth and light and well visible from afar to any travellers on the lake.

The paintings of Lintuinvuori are very faint and difficult to discern. The painted area is ca. 1.5 m wide and located between ca. 4.0 and 4.8 m above water. It may include a human figure (height ca. 30 cm), although the identification is uncertain.

Field research

1997, Survey, Kaarlo Katiskoski & Teemu Mökkönen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 4, 84

116.**MUNICIPALITY:** TAIPALSAARI**SITE:** RUUSIN TURASALO**Register number:** 831 01 0013**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 313404 Rutola**Coordinates:** p: 6779 470, i: 3557 600, z: 80**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on Lake Pien-Saimaa, on the western part of the island of Turasalo.

The painting consists of an elk figure and two possible human figures. The paintings are weathered and the rock is dark red in colour, making it rather difficult to discern any details.

Field research

1975, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1995: 152-153

Kivikäs 1999: 87-88

Kivikäs 2005: 135

*Lintuinvuori.*

117.**MUNICIPALITY:** TAIPALSAARI**SITE:** SUURI TURASALO**Register number:** 831 00 0002**Year found:** 1975**Topographic map:** 3134 05 Taipalsaari**Coordinates:** p: 6780 930, i: 3556 440, z: 75.70**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 3**Description**

The site is located on Lake Pien-Saimaa, on a lakeshore cliff rising on the south-western shore of the island of Suuri Turasalo,

The cliff bears some remains of red colour. It is unclear if the marks are man-made or natural.

Field research

1975, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Kivikäs 1999: 88



Ruusin Turasalo seen from Lake Saimaa.

118.**MUNICIPALITY:** TAIPALSAARI**SITE:** VALKEISAARI**Register number:** 831 01 0012**Year found:** 1966**Topographic map:** 3134 02 Vitsai**Coordinates:** p: 6782 530, i: 3549 220, z: 86.7**Orientation:** SSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the small island of Valkeisaari on Lake Pien-Saimaa. The paintings have been made on a cliff (Lampuvuori) rising on the western shore of the island. A sandy terrace littered with boulders makes it possible to study the paintings from dry land.

The paintings of Valkeisaari are located in two areas: Valkeisaari A is on a narrow ledge of the cliff ca. 10 m above the lake and consists of a boat figure with an elk head in the prow and a crew of 'arrow-headed' humans. Small fragments of painting can be seen below and to the right of the boat figure. The second painted area, Valkeisaari B, is located at the foot of the cliff ca. 2.5 m above water. This painting is larger, ca. 2.2 m wide and 2.3 m high, but includes no clear images (although an intensively red area may be the remains of a double handprint). Excavations in the soil below the painting have brought to light Textile Ware pottery, flint and quartz flakes and artefacts (NM 17040: 1-3, NM 35202: 1-85) and a fireplace.

Field research

1966, Inspection, Matti Huurre

1966, Inspection, Ville Luho

1970, Inspection and trial excavation, Pekka Sarvas

1975, Survey, Timo Miettinen

2005, Excavation, Antti Lahelma



A view of the lower terrace of Valkeisaari before the excavations of 2005.

Literature

Luho, V. 1968: En hällmålning i Taipalsaari. *Finskt Museum* 75, 33–9.

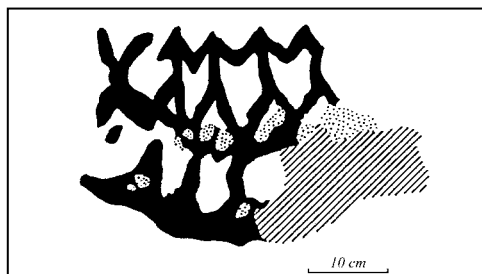
Kivikäs 1995: 149-151

Kivikäs 1999: 85-87

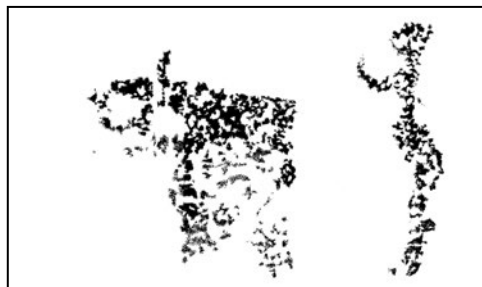
Kivikäs 2005: 134

Lahelma, A: 2006. Excavating Art: a 'Ritual Deposit' Associated with the Rock Painting of Valkeisaari, Eastern Finland. *Fennoscandia Archaeologica* XXIII, 2-23.

Lahelma, A: 2007. Uhritutia Valkeisaarella? Kalliomaalaus edustalla järjestettyjen kaivausten tuloksia ja tulkintaa. *Aurinkopeura* 3, 49-82.



A tracing of Valkeisaari A by Ville Luho.



An elk and a human figure at Jyrkkävuori. Tracing by T.Miettinen.



The cliff of Jyrkkävuori.

119.

MUNICIPALITY: VALKEALA

SITE: JYRKKÄVUORI

Register number: 909 01 0004

Year found: 1984

Topographic map: 3113 11 Utti

Coordinates: p: 6758 040, i: 3492 490, z: 63.5

Orientation: ESE

Class: 1

Description

The site is located on a cliff rising on the south-western shore of Lake Repojärvi. A narrow wooded terrace makes it possible to access the painting from dry land.

The painted area is rather large, ca. 11 m wide, but badly weathered and the figures are difficult to discern because of the red colour of the rock. Amidst the homogenous areas of red colour, at least three human figures and two elk can be discerned. A scene representing an elk and a human figure in profile behind it deserves special mention.

Field research

1984, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1990: Valkealan esihistoriaa. *Valkealan historia* I, 49-85.

Kivikäs 1995: 248-250

Miettinen 2000: 138-143

120.

MUNICIPALITY: VALKEALA

SITE: LAKIASUONVUORI

Register number: 909 01 0005**Year found:** 1985**Topographic map:** 3113 11 Utti**Coordinates:** p: 6758 970, i: 3496 640, z: 65**Orientation:** ENE**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located in the central part of a long and impressive precipice (Lakiasuonvuori) that faces east and lies today in the middle of a wet forest. A swamp and a small lake (Koipia) are what remains of a larger body of water, at the edge of which the cliff has once stood.

The paintings are located on two panels at a distance of ca. 10 m from each other. The first area consists of an elk painted in outline and without legs. Some fragmentary paintings are seen below the elk (a human figure and a U-shaped figure?). The second painted area consists of a single fully painted elk. All the paintings are badly weathered and difficult to identify because of the reddish colour of the cliff.

Field research

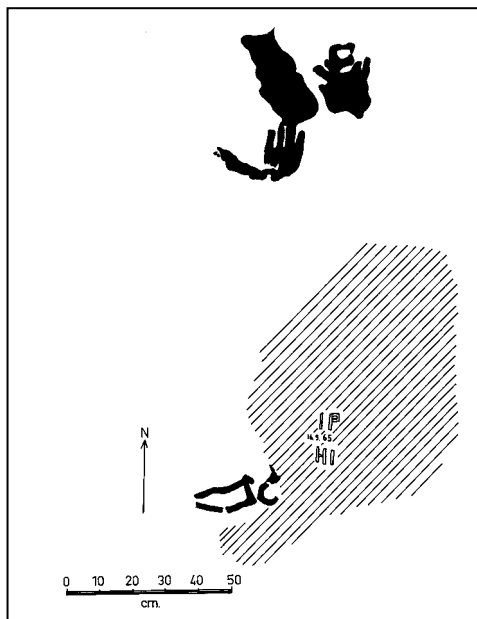
1985, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1990: Valkealan esihistoriaa. *Valkealan historia* I, 49-85.

Kivikäs 1995: 246-247

Miettinen 2000: 143-147

Kivikäs 2005: 152



A tracing of the Löppösenluola painting by J.-P. Taavitsainen.

121.

MUNICIPALITY: VALKEALA

SITE: LÖPPÖSENLUOLA

Register number: 909 01 0002**Year found:** 1974**Topographic map:** 3114 11 Luujärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6785 190, i: 3491 460, z: 78**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of a narrow strait (Ruskiasalmi) strait on Lake Repovesi, where a high cliff called Ruskialallio or Löppösenluola rises straight from the lake. The cliff features a small semi-cave that offers some shelter from rain. The paintings have been made in the open air a little to the left of the "cave".

The painting is an area of red paint, most of which is blurred but originally appears to have included some representational images. A handprint and a possible human figure can be discerned. Because the site is popular with trekkers, the painting has been damaged by carved initials and smoke from the fireplaces. The cliff has been claimed to be anthropomorphic in shape.

Field research

1974, Inspection, Pekka Sarvas & Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen

2006, Survey, Antti Lahelma & Timo Miettinen

LiteratureTaavitsainen, J.-P. 1981: Löppösenluola hällmålning i Valkeala. *Finskt Museum* 86, 11-16.Miettinen, T. 1990: Valkealan esihistoriaa. *Valkealan historia* I, 49-85.

Kivikäs 1995: 202-203

Miettinen 2000: 136-138

Kivikäs 2005: 34



The cliff of Ruskiasallio. The painting of Löppösenluola is located in the middle of the picture.

122.**MUNICIPALITY:** VALKEALA**SITE:** OLHAVANVUORI**Register number:** 909 01 0007**Year found:** 2001**Topographic map:** 3114 11 Luujärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6786 350, i: 3491 450, z: 89**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 2/3**Description**

The site is located on the eastern shore of the small lake of Olhavanlampi, where a massive, steep cliff (Olhavanvuori) rises directly from the lake.

The paintings are found on two panels, one on the cliff itself – a small roundish mark that may be the remains of a handprint – and one on a boulder at the foot of the cliff, also possibly featuring a handprint. The cliff is impressive, but the paintings themselves are very modest.

Field research

2001, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

2002, Survey, Johanna Seppä

2006, Survey, Antti Lahelma & Timo Miettinen

Literature

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123.**MUNICIPALITY:** VALKEALA**SITE:** REVONKÄRKI**Register number:** 909 01 0008**Year found:** 1984**Topographic map:** 3113 11 Utti**Coordinates:** p: 6758 710, i: 3493 320, z: 63**Orientation:** SW**Class:** 2**Description**

The site is located on the tip of a westwards-oriented peninsula (Revonkäarki) on Lake Rapojärvi. The painted cliff is a small, concave shelter that rises directly from the lake.

The painting is bright red and probably man-made, but it features no identifiable figures.

Field research

1984, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen 2000: 142-143



The cliff of Olhavanvuori, frequented by rock climbers.

124.**MUNICIPALITY:** VALKEALA**SITE:** VERLA**Register number:** 909 01 0001**Year found:** 1974**Topographic map:** 3114 07 Vuohijärvi**Coordinates:** p: 6772 750, i: 3480 560, z: 73.5**Orientation:** WSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on a rather unimpressive cliff at small rapids near between two lakes that belong to the Kymijoki river system. The rapids are today harnessed by a dam.

The painted area is ca. 6 m wide and located ca. 50 cm above water. It features an exceptional composition of elk and human figures in a row. On the left hand side, the group is led by an elk painted in outline. The elk is unusual in several respects: its heart is marked with a spot, it appears to have antlers and there is a small horned human figure apparently riding on its back. This elk is followed by at least six more elk painted in outline and facing left. Amongst the elk, two human figures and a zigzag-line can be discerned. On the right-hand side of the painting, there is a large blurred area of red paint.

Field research

1974, Survey, Timo Miettinen

Literature

Miettinen, T. 1990: Valkealan esihistoriaa. *Valkealan historia* 1, 49-85.

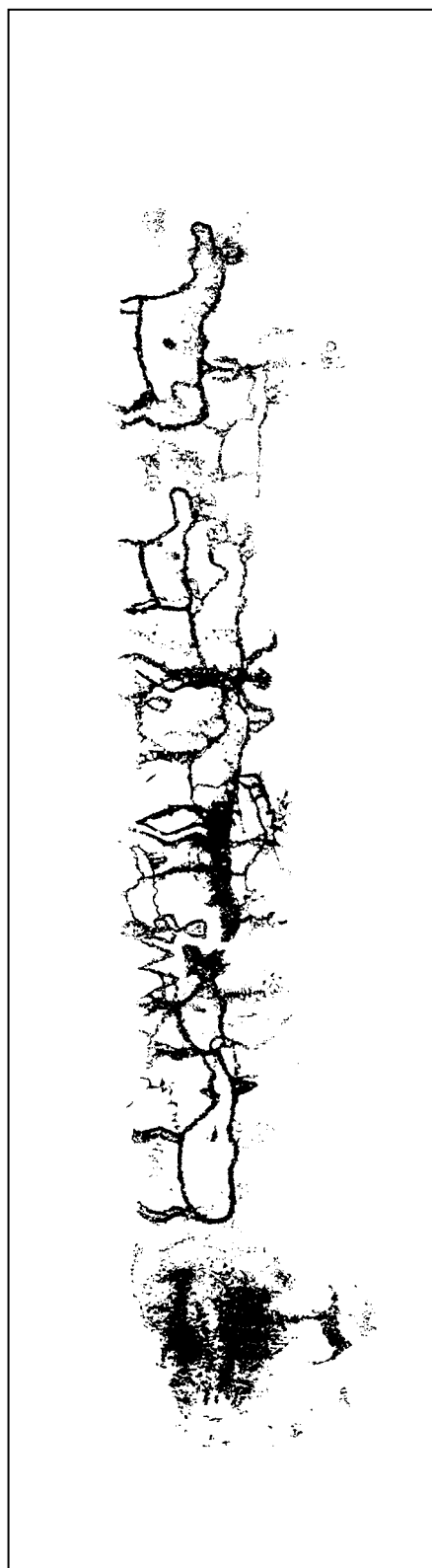
Kivikäs 1995: 211

Miettinen 2000: 112-125

Kivikäs 2005: 124



The painted cliff of Verla.



A tracing of the rock painting of Verla by T.Miettinen.

125.**MUNICIPALITY:** VALKEALA**SITE:** VOIKOSKI**Register number:** 909 01 0003**Year found:** 1977**Topographic map:** 3114 09 Voikoski**Coordinates:** p: 6794 360, i: 3488 030, z: 80**Orientation:** SSW**Class:** 1**Description**

The site is located on the southern end of Lake Sarkavesi, at the mouth of the Voikoski rapids (now harnessed by a lumber mill). The cliff is on the eastern bank of the rapids, hidden by a strip of forest growing at its foot.

The paintings are located on the on the lower part of the cliff. They are faint and difficult to see, but include at least two human figures and a boat. The right leg of one of the human figures is strangely extended into a wriggling line.

Field research

1977, Inspection, Timo Miettinen

LiteratureMiettinen, T. 1990: Valkealan esihistoriaa. *Valkealan historia* I, 49-85.

Kivikäs 1995: 200-201

Miettinen 2000: 133-135

*The cliff of Voikoski.***126.****MUNICIPALITY:** VIHTI**SITE:** SALMINJÄRVI**Register number:** 1000 00 4129**Year found:** 1996**Topographic map:** 2041 08 Ojakkala**Coordinates:** p: 6697 020, i: 3363 356, z: 54**Orientation:** NE**Class:** 1/2**Description**

The site is located on the southern shore of Lake Salminjärvi, on the eastern side of a high peninsula (Lautmäki), where high cliffs rise directly from the lake.

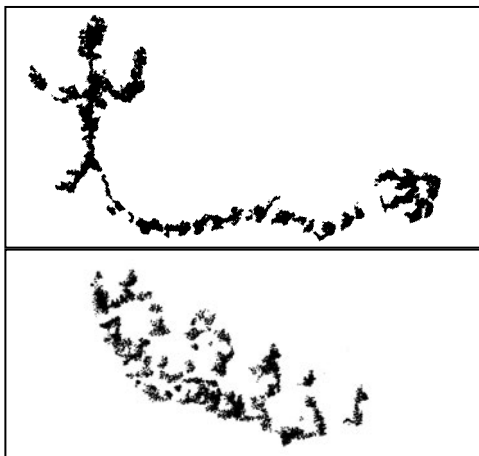
The painting includes several unclear remains of painting that are undoubtedly man-made, but do not feature any clear images. One of the painted spots does, however, remind one of a schematic, long-necked water bird of the kind found at the site of Rapakko. The paintings have been made between 2.2 and 1.75 meters above water.

Field research

2004, Inspection, Helena Taskinen & Tuula Heikkuri-Montell

Literature

Kivikäs 2005: 162

*Two figures from Voikoski. Tracings by T.Miettinen.**A view of the cliff of Lautmäki from Lake Salminjärvi.*

A MAP OF FINLAND, WITH THE LOCATIONS OF ALL ROCK PAINTINGS KNOWN IN 2007 SHOWN. NOTE THAT THE LEVEL OF TOPOGRAPHIC DETAIL IS RELATIVELY POOR, MAKING IT APPEAR THAT SEVERAL ROCK ART SITES ARE LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE OF A LAKE. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEM ARE LOCATED ON ISLANDS, MANY ARE IN FACT ON PENINSULAS AND BAYS OF THE LABYRINTHINE LAKE SYSTEMS OF THE FINNISH INTERIOR.



